THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
A Commentary by Derek Walker
Part 1: John chapters 1 to 11

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Introduction to the GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Gospel of John has a special importance to the New-Testament. Jesus commanded the apostles to teach all nations “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19,20). Here we see that Jesus’ own life and teaching, as recorded for us in the Gospels, is foundational to the rest of the New-Testament. As Jesus prepares the apostles for their ministry after He leaves, He predicts how the New-Testament will be written under the inspiration of the Holy-Spirit:

(1) “He will teach you all things, and bring all things (all the teaching of Jesus) to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you” (John 14:26). Thus the GOSPELS were written by the help of the Spirit.

(2) “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13a). This speaks of further truth the Spirit will reveal to the apostles. This truth is recorded in ACTS and the EPISTLES. It is truth that is built on the foundation of the personal teaching of Jesus, because the Spirit is sent from Jesus: “He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak” (John 16:13b).

(3) “and He will show you things to come” (John16:13c). This was fulfilled by the BOOK of REVELATION, which completes God’s Word.

If we think of the New-Testament as a house of doctrine:
(1) The four Gospels are the four foundation stones
(2) Acts forms the vertical walls, into which the rooms of the Epistles fit.
(3) Revelation is the roof, that goes on last, completing the house.

The Gospels show Jesus Christ from four distinct viewpoints, each with their own emphasis. The synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke) have many similarities. They teach Christ’s Deity, but focus more on His humanity (as seen in the genealogies). However, John is quite different and stands out from the rest. Written after the others, it rarely repeats them, but prefers to add material missed by the others. John emphasises the Deity of Christ (the Son of God), beginning with His Divine origin, rather than His human birth. Therefore John’s Gospel is the Cornerstone of the Foundation of the New-Testament! It is the place to begin because the other books (including the Gospels) find their rightful place in relation to it. In the Appendix, I show how this principle works out for the Chronology of Jesus’ Life.

v1: “In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
v2 He was in the beginning with God.
v3 All things were made through Him,
and without Him nothing was made that was made.
v4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
v5 And the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John the Baptist
v6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
v7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light,
that all through him might believe.
v8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

v9 That was the true Light, which - coming into the world -
gives light to every man.
v10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him,
and the world did not know Him.
v11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.
v12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right
to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
v13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,
nor of the will of man, but of God.

v14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
and we beheld His glory, the glory as of
the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

v15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying,
“This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred
before me, for He was before me.’
v16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.
v17 For the law was given through Moses,
but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
v18 No one has seen God at any time: The only begotten Son,
who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.
The four Gospels present Jesus from four viewpoints (like the four faces of the Cherubim): **MATTHEW** - The Messianic King of Israel, the Lion of Judah (appealing especially to the Jews)
**MARK** - The Servant = The Ox (appealing especially to the Romans)
**LUKE** - the Perfect Man (appealing especially to the Greeks)
**JOHN** - the Son of God from heaven = the Eagle (for all men).

Each Gospel starts with a corresponding genealogy of Christ, showing His origins: **MATTHEW** gives the line of succession from Abraham and David through Joseph, establishing His right of Kingship over Israel.
**MARK** - presents Him as a Servant, so no origins are given.
**LUKE** - describes his human origins through Mary and her genealogy.
**JOHN** - is unique and starts by giving His Divine genealogy (origins).

For He is the Pre-Existant Son. Before He became the man called Jesus 2000 years ago, He eternally existed as God.

As Micah 5:2 points out the babe of Bethlehem has His origins in eternity: “Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth unto Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth (origins) are from of old, from everlasting.”

v1,14: “In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with (pros = ‘face to face’) God (in eternal loving communion with the Father), and the Word was God ... and the Word (Jesus) became flesh (His conception) and dwelt (tabernacled) among us (his birth was at the feast of Tabernacles), and we beheld His glory (Jesus’ life, ministry, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension, all seen by eyewitnesses).”

This One called the Word took upon himself a human nature (flesh).

John starts by declaring that the man Jesus is also the eternal Word.

He did not just appear as a man, but became a true man 2000 years ago. But this was not the beginning of His existence for He was always the eternal Word. He became a man but did not stop being God. Jesus Christ was and is God manifest in the flesh - the unique God-Man.

“John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me (John was older than Jesus) is preferred before me, for He was before me (the pre-existent Word)” (v15)

“In the beginning was the Word” is a clear reference to Genesis 1:1, the foundational verse of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the
heaven and the earth.” This declares God’s existence. The Bible says it is self-evident that God exists - only the darkness of man’s heart causes him sometimes to deny this fact. The Psalmist says: “The fool says in his heart: there is no God.” He denies God, in a vain attempt to be his own god but this is foolish because God exists anyway and will judge him. Genesis 1:1 teaches: (1) Before time began the eternal God exists. (2) He created the space-time-matter universe. (3) There is One God who created (singular), yet He exists in plurality (Elohim). As the progressive revelation of God grew, so it becomes clearer that He exists in Trinity - as Father, Son and Holy-Spirit. (4) He created the Universe in His Triune image (space-time-matter) and man also in His personal image (as spirit-soul-body): “Hear (‘gather into one’), O Israel: (1) The LORD (2) our God, (3) the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God (1) with all your heart (spirit), (2) with all your soul and (3) with all your strength (body)” (Deut6:4,5)

As Genesis 1:1 is the foundational verse of the Old Testament, so John 1:1 is the foundational verse of the New Testament, building upon it and elaborating on the plurality of Elohim. v1 is a key statement of the Trinity: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was (pros = ‘face to face’) with God (the Father and Son are united together in love), and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” The Word (Son) is distinct from the Father, yet He is also God. He exists eternally with the Father, bound together in eternal love, for God is by nature Love. We see two Divine Persons, yet One God. Later a third Divine Person will be revealed - the Holy-Spirit (who may be thought of as the Personified Love-Gift being eternally given between the Father and Son) - who completes the Tri-unity of God.

Why is He called the Word? This shows God is by nature a Communicator If people don’t know or hear God it is not because He is not speaking, but because they are not listening (not tuned in). God reveals Himself through the Second Person - the Word: “No one has seen God (the Father) at any time: The only begotten (unique) Son, who is (abides eternally) in the bosom of the Father (abiding in the place of closest intimacy, and so knows the Father perfectly), He has declared Him (made Him known, explained Him, shown us what He is like)” (v18). The WORD, also called the only begotten SON of God, reveals God to us.
Just as Genesis 1 reveals God as the Creator of all, so John 1 reveals the Word as the Creator of all: “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (v3). Creation was God’s first act of self-revelation and it was accomplished by the Word. God the Father spoke and the Word went forth with His Spirit (breath) and created all things. The Word was the instrument of Creation. John shows us that the Word is a Person, the One Who created all things. He is confirming that Jesus, the Word, is true God, for only God can be called Creator. “In Him was life (He is Life), and the life was the light of men” (v4). As well as being our Creator, He is the Source of all Life, both natural and spiritual. His life lights up our mind (soul).

“And the Light shines in the darkness (of the world), and the darkness did not comprehend (understand, overcome or extinguish) it” (v5). This is a summary of His ministry: (1) The eternal Light came into the world, invading the kingdom of darkness, (2) The darkness (satan and evil men) resisted him (even putting Him to death) (3) But the darkness could not overcome the Light. The Word triumphed. He rose from the dead and all who receive Him become lights (the light multiplies).

Next, John introduces John the Baptist and his testimony to Jesus Christ: “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light” (v6-8). John was only a prophet, the greatest of a line of prophets all bearing witness to the Coming Messiah, who was the true Light: “That was the true Light (revealing God) which, coming into the world (by the incarnation) - gives light to every man (note the corrected translation). He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own (Israel), and His own did not receive Him” (v9-11).

Israel as a nation rejected her King, but many individuals did believe in Him: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His Name (His character and identity as the Son of God) who were born (not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man) but (born) of God (they receive a supernatural rebirth, becoming actual children of God by regeneration - see John 3 for more detail)” (v12,13).
The issue is believing in Christ which results in receiving Life through the New-Birth. The key word of John’s Gospel is **believe**, and it constantly shows the way people either believed (received) Him or rejected Him. In fact the very purpose of John’s Gospel is: “**that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His Name**” (John 20:31). It is written to bring people to faith in Jesus as the Son of God, for it is through this faith that we receive eternal life. So it starts by declaring that He is the Eternal Word, the Creator and Source of all Life (1:1-18). It continues by proving this through eight selected major Signs Jesus performed (John 20:30).

“**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory** (the manifestation of His Deity), **the glory as of the only begotten (Son) of the Father, full of grace and truth**” (v14). Although we became sons of God by the New-Birth, He remains the unique eternally begotten Son of God (v18). Our sonship is by creation, His is by eternal generation. He is in a different category altogether. He is God the Son. He is **“full of grace and truth”** - these are the basic inseparable qualities of God, revealed in the glory of the Son. It is the perfect combination of mercy and justice. In men, truth alone is harsh, grace alone is soft (Col4:6)

**John’s Testimony:** **John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying,**

“**This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was (eternally) before me’**” (v15).

The personal testimony of the first believers: “**And of His fullness (‘of grace and truth’ - v14, the divine nature) we have all received, and grace upon grace** (we receive wave upon wave of blessing!). **For the law was given through Moses, but ‘grace and truth’** (v14,16) **came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time: The only begotten Son (the oldest manuscripts say: ‘The only begotten God’), Who is (eternally) in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him**” (v16-18).

This is the foundational passage of John and of the whole New Testament. It reveals the foundational truth of the New Testament that Jesus is the fulfilment of all the prophets, the eternal Son of God, the Source of all life, and through believing in Him we are born-again and receive wave upon wave of ever-increasing divine blessing, grace and life. So put all your faith in JESUS CHRIST as LORD (God) and receive of His fullness!
Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"
He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."
And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?"
He said, "I am not."
"Are you the Prophet?"
And he answered, "No."
Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"
He said: "I am "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD," as the prophet Isaiah said."
Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees.
And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptise if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"
John answered them, saying, "I baptise with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know.
It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."
These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptising.
The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’
I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptising with water."
And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.
I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptise with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptises with the Holy Spirit."
And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."
(For more of John’s witness see John 3:22-36 on page 35).
Introduction: This section of scripture describes John’s witness to Jesus, soon after His Baptism and the 40 day Temptation in the Wilderness (recorded in the other Gospels). Jesus returned to the Baptist to spend some private time with him (3:26) and receive his public endorsement, before starting to gather His disciples (including John, the Gospel writer). Jesus was now entering His first phase of public ministry which lasted until the time of the arrest of John the Baptist. Only John gives details of this first phase (1:19-4:42). It is October/November AD 29 soon after Jesus’ 30th Birthday at Tabernacles (John 1:14).

The Witness of John the Baptist to Jesus - teaches us that true ministry requires HUMILITY, turning attention away from us onto Jesus.

Day 1: “Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” (Question 1) (v19) These were the religious police sent to check out possible prophets and Messiahs for John had drawn crowds and caused a great stir with his preaching. “He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed (using a threefold emphasis) ‘I am not the Christ’ (v20).

Question 2: “And they asked him “What then? Are you Elijah?” (v21). (this possibility comes from Malachi 4:1,2, for the Jews correctly believed that Elijah would come first to prepare Israel for the Messiah. Elijah did not die but went up to heaven in a chariot. He will come before the Second Coming as one of the two witnesses but because God knew Israel would reject Christ, John went in his place. John came in the spirit and power of Elijah but was not Elijah in person. So: He said, “I am not.”

Then Question 3: “Are you the Prophet?” From Deut18:15, the ‘Prophet like Moses’ was also expected, but this was just a title for Messiah. So: “And he answered, “No.” See how John’s answers get shorter: “I am not the Christ..I am not..No.” Not a very exciting interview so far! But John wasn’t interested in talking about himself, but only about the Lord.

Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” He said: “I am ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Make straight the way of the LORD,” as the prophet Isaiah said” (v22,23). John was not into names and titles. He just called himself a ‘voice’ sent to prepare the way for the true glory. He was saying: “I am not important, I am just a messenger, it’s my message that counts. I am just a voice, don’t look at me, but look at the One I am talking about.”
Yet John was one with the authority of one sent by God in fulfilment of
the scriptures. He referred to Isaiah 40:3-8 to establish his place and
authority in God’s plan as the special prophet of Christ:

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of
the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low;
the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places
smooth; and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh
shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”
The voice said, “Cry out!” And he said, “What shall I cry?”
“All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the LORD
blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers,
the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”

Before a King arrived in a town preparations were made so He could be
welcomed properly. A straight road was made so His glory could be
seen and welcomed. Everything in the way was removed. So John
came to Israel before Christ to prepare their hearts, to remove pride and
unbelief, so that they would be ready to receive the King and His
Kingdom in humility and faith. John preached on sin, righteousness
and judgement pointing out man’s need for a Saviour, and those who
received his message were baptised by him to acknowledge that they
were sinners needing salvation. In baptism they symbolically declared
their need and desire to be washed and reborn by the Messiah (through
death, burial and resurrection) and thus made ready for His Kingdom.

“Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. And they asked
him, saying, “Why then do you baptise if you are not the Christ, nor
Elijah, nor the Prophet?” (v24,25). ‘What authority do you have to
baptise if you are neither Elijah nor the Messiah?’ They are upset that he
was breaking their traditions by baptising Jews. They believed baptism
was for unclean Gentiles who wanted to become Jews (by a symbolic
rebirth), but not for Jews who did not need it. John’s Baptism was hard
for them because it was a confession of sin. But rather than arguing,
John seeks to divert attention onto Jesus: John answered them, saying,
“I baptise with water, but there stands One among you whom you do
not know (Jesus was already present but had told John to wait for the
right time to identify Him). It is He who, coming after me (John was born and ministered first), is preferred before me (because He is the pre-existent Son of God, see v15,30) whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose” (v26-27). This is a a slave’s job, so he was saying: ‘I’m not worthy to be His slave’). He was saying: ‘Don’t get hung up on my baptism, which is only to prepare you for the Messiah, who will do the real Spirit-baptism’ The Jewish leaders don’t seem interested in Jesus yet, because it was John who was still pulling the crowds. “These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptising (v28).

John’s witness to the Lamb of God.
Day 2: “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him (to be publicly identified by him), and said, “Behold! (‘Here He is - the One I’ve been talking about is here!’). The (sacrificial, Passover) Lamb of God who takes away (all) the sin of the world!” (v29).

They knew from Leviticus 17:11, that sin was only removed through blood. John declared Christ would fulfil Isaiah 53, dying as the sacrifice for our sins to redeem us to God. The key for us to receive salvation is to behold Jesus Christ, to look at Him with the eyes of faith. John’s ministry (and ours) is simply to point people to Jesus, especially to His substitutionary death on the Cross. Our message is: “BEHOLD - the Lamb”. Jesus is the answer, the Lord, Saviour and Life-Giver.

John had received a revelation of what Jesus meant at His Baptism (Matthew 3:13-17): “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptised by him. And John tried to stop Him, saying, “I need to be baptised by You, and are You coming to me?” (as we will see soon, he did not know yet that Jesus was the Messiah, but he knew his cousin Jesus was sinless. John felt sinful in His presence. As baptism was for sinners, he did not think it right for Jesus to be baptised, especially by himself - a sinner). But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus (in this way: by Me taking the place of sinners and going through death and resurrection) it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness (God’s will to save man).” Then he allowed (permitted) Him. (Thus His Baptism was prophetic of His death and resurrection). When He had been baptised, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him,
and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”

Having shown man’s PROBLEM (need) in his previous ministry, John now presents the SOLUTION. The emphasis of John’s message changed from JUDGEMENT to SALVATION. Our message is the same: “You are sinners under God’s judgement but there is an answer: ‘Behold the Lamb. There is salvation by BEHOLDING (believing in) the Lamb slain for the forgiveness of your sins.”

1. John first testified to God’s judgement on sin (before Christ’s baptism)
2. John testified to Christ’s sinlessness (at Christ’s baptism)
3. John witnessed that Christ is our Saviour from sin (after Christ’s Baptism).

“This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me’ (being the persistent Son of God).’ I did not know Him (that He was the Messiah) but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptising with water.”

John’s ministry was to make Jesus known.

And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him (to be the Messiah), but He who sent me to baptise with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him (by the gift of discerning of spirits, John saw the Spirit come upon Jesus and he also continued to see the Spirit remain upon Him) this is He who baptises with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen (the Spirit upon Him) and testified that this is the Son of God (for He heard God say concerning Jesus : ‘This is My beloved Son’)” (v30-34).

John only knew for sure that Jesus was the Messiah when he saw what happened at Jesus’ baptism. John’s message was:

(1) the Person and (2) the Work of Jesus Christ: He is the Son of God, who baptises us with the Spirit. He brings a 2-fold Salvation:
(1) By giving His Blood and (2) by giving His Spirit.

John (1) presented Jesus as the Lamb of God (removing the negative- sin. Then he (2) presented Jesus as the Baptiser in the Holy-Spirit (bringing in the positive-power to live a holy life).
3. The First Disciples of Jesus (John 1:35-51).

John, Andrew and Peter

v35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.
v36,37 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.
v38,39 Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

v40-42 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, a Stone).

Philip and Nathanael

v43-45 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."
v46 And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."
v47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"
v48 Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."
v49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"
v50,51 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, "I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."
Day 3: “Again, the next day” (the 3rd day in a sequence- see John 1:26,29) John (the Baptist) stood with two of his disciples (Andrew and John, the gospel-writer, who is giving us his eyewitness testimony, but never refers to himself by name). And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” (v35,36). Again John the Baptist points people to Jesus, as the Lamb of God, our Saviour from sin by His own Blood. John is our example for humble Christ-centred ministry.

“The two disciples (Andrew and John) heard him speak, and they followed Jesus (the first two disciples of Jesus)” (v37). This is true success in ministry, when you have pointed men to Jesus and they follow after Him as a result. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?” (v38). He is testing their motives. He knows they follow Him but why? What’s your purpose in following Jesus? What do you want? He asks this searching question of all disciples. They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher) “where are You staying?” (v38). A good answer. They want Him to be their Teacher. They want to learn about God and life. They don’t want a quick fix but a whole transformation of life. They want to abide with Him, spending time in fellowship with Him. That is why they asked where He was living. They were good discipleship material and Jesus was willing to spend quality time with them and He gave them an invitation:

“He said to them, “COME and SEE” (v38). This is what He says to all who start to follow Him.

(1) COME with Me, follow Me, spend time with Me, lay down your own agendas and get involved with Me and my work.
(2) Then if you will come closer to Jesus, you will SEE answers for your life, you will see God working in and through your life.

“They CAME and SAW where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the 10th hour)” (v39). So Jesus spent that Sabbath day with them from 10am (John used the Roman system of counting hours from midnight and noon). What a time that must have been!

Day 4: The Ministry of Andrew - bringing people to Jesus one by one. “One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother (the other was surely John,
He first (or ‘the first thing the next day’, (this is now the 4th day that began in v19) FOUND his own brother Simon (John also found his brother James, for ‘first’ probably also signifies that Andrew found his brother ‘first’, before John found James) and said to him, “We have FOUND the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ - the Anointed One).  And he brought him to Jesus” (v40,41).

Spending time with Jesus convinced them that He was the Messiah. Then they give us a great example for personal evangelism. They started SEEKING and FINDING the lost, starting with their family and friends. When they said: “We have FOUND the Messiah” they were sharing their testimony of how they had been SEEKING God and seeking answers, and how they then FOUND the answer in JESUS (for He who seeks God will find Him). So they shared about they had personally met with Jesus. Then they BROUGHT their brothers to Jesus so they could experience Him themselves. So, here we see how the Church grows: by inviting and bringing people to Jesus and to Church. God’s main way for adding disciples is always by personal invitation and enlistment. If each believer invites and brings others, the Church would grow quickly.

“And he brought him to Jesus.” This is true ministry - to ‘bring people to Jesus’. Only Jesus has the answers, the life and the power to help, save and transform people. We must teach them not to look for salvation in themselves or in us, but in Christ alone. So we must bring them to Jesus.

“Now when Jesus looked (intently) at him (Andrew’s brother Simon), He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah.  You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, a Stone or Rock)” (v42). When Jesus looked at Simon he received a word of knowledge and wisdom from the Holy-Spirit. First He knew his name and ancestry. Then He revealed his destiny and coming change of character through his future change of name from Simon to Peter, indicating his transformation from emotional instability, to rocklike strength and reliability (see also Matthew 16:17,18).

Whenever we see Andrew, he is bringing people to Jesus:
1. First, he found his brother Peter, gave his testimony and brought him to Jesus (1:41).
2. Then, he brought the boy with the loaves and fish (John 6:8,9).

Although it seemed a hopeless situation, and what the boy
had to offer was insignificant against the problem, somehow Andrew knew that if he could get him to Jesus there would be answer. People’s situations may seem hopeless and their resources insufficient, but if we can get them to Jesus miracles will happen.

3. **Andrew brought Greeks who said: “We would see Jesus”** (12:20-22). Andrew later lived in Peter’s shadow, but he brought him to the Lord and so shared in all of Peter’s fruit. You may have a one-on-one ministry to people, but you will bring a Peter to Jesus who will bring many others and you will share in the rewards of his ministry. If you are faithful in personal work your impact will be great for God.

**Day 5: The Call of PHILIP** (v43,44): **“The following day** (it is now a Monday) **Jesus wanted to go to Galilee** (starting His journey to Cana for the Wedding), and He FOUND PHILIP and said to him, **“Follow Me.”** Now Philip was from Bethsaida (in Galilee), the city of Andrew and Peter.” This next disciple Jesus found Himself. When we find Jesus, it is really because He sought us and found us. Jesus looks for those whose heart is open to Him (Philip was a seeker -see v45). Then He finds them and calls them to follow Him. He says to us also: ‘travel with me through life, spend time with me, learn how I walk with God through life and walk with Me.’ You can’t be a disciple from a distance. You have to be close to catch His every word and observe all he does so you can imitate Him.

**The Call of NATHANAEEL** (v45-51).

“**Philip found NATHANAEEL** (also known as the apostle ‘Bartholemew’) and said to him, **“We have FOUND HIM of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”** And Nathanael said to him, **“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”** (v45,46). This is an example of this man’s lack of guile (deceit, pretence, scheming), to which Jesus refers (v47). He was not a man to be easily impressed, and was not going to pretend a false interest or enthusiasm. He thought the Messiah would come from Bethlehem or certainly a more impressive place than Nazareth!

“**Philip said to him, “COME and SEE”** (v46, the same words Jesus had used to invite Andrew in v38). Philip knew the key was to BRING him to Jesus and meet Him personally. By following what Jesus, Andrew and John did, Philip now also becomes a personal evangelist.
Again we see that the Church grows by the personal WITNESS of believers to their friends and acquaintances, followed by INVITING and BRINGING them to Jesus and the Church.

“Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an ISRAELITE indeed, in whom is no GUILE!” (v47). The key to this remark is that deceit or guile is the meaning of JACOB (‘schemer’), whose name was later changed to ISRAEL (‘God is Prince’). He said: "Here comes an Israel who is not Jacob."

This announcement by Jesus was a very unusual welcome, which had the effect of rattling Nathaniel’s cage and breaking through his scepticism. The dramatic effect of this conversation on Nathanael is only explained by the fact that Jesus accurately read his recent inner thoughts as well as his character (a powerful double word of knowledge) Thus he must have been meditating on Jacob’s life and transformation into Israel by God’s dealings. This is confirmed as the conversation develops:

“Nathanael said to Him, “HOW do You KNOW ME?” (v48). See his lack of guile. Without any fake modesty, he admits the compliment as accurate. Jesus knew him - but how? Shaken by the accuracy of the word, he tests the source of Jesus’ information (was it supernatural or natural?) Perhaps Jesus had heard of him and by coincidence Jesus’ words had exactly mirrored his thoughts? All doubts are soon dispelled: “Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the Fig Tree (the place of meditation), I SAW YOU” (v48). This had to be Divine knowledge for there was no way Jesus could know that. Jesus knew him, because by the Spirit He had seen him. He did not say ‘He saw him sitting under the tree’, but ‘when under the tree He saw HIM.’ That is: He saw his character and thoughts as well as his body position. Jesus had said enough to let him know that He had not just seen him outwardly, but He had also seen his inward meditations on Jacob (this is further confirmed by what Jesus said next).

“Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” (v49). He was convinced by Jesus’ intimate knowledge of him that He had to be the One, and correctly described the unique Person and Work of the Messiah.

“Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw
you under the fig tree,’ you believe. You will see greater things (signs of His Messiahship) than these.” And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (v50,51).

Here Jesus is responding to his faith by confirming that He knew exactly what Nathanael had been thinking about (namely Jacob’s dream in Genesis 28 of a Ladder between heaven and earth with angels going up and down). Jesus talked more about Jacob, because Nathanael had been thinking of Jacob and desired to experience the glory of God also:

“If Jacob (the schemer) can see this why not me too?” Jesus started where Nathanael was at, to teach him more, presenting Himself as the fulfilment of Jacob’s dream and Nathaniel’s meditations. Jesus was claiming that Jacob’s Ladder finds its fulfilment in Himself: “The Greater than Jacob’s Ladder is here.” Jacob had named the place: “Bethel: the house of God and the gate of heaven!” Bethel was a unique location, the focal point for the intersection between God and this earth, for the meeting of God and man. Jesus declared Himself to be the living Bethel: to be with Him is to be in the Presence of God! "You believe just because I told you about you and your thoughts under the fig tree. That's nothing! You will see that I am the walking, talking Bethel - the place where God and man meet! Just wait until you see the angels, my friend!"

God was showing struggling man (Jacob), that although he can’t make it by his own power or righteousness, God would drop a Ladder down from Heaven and establish it on earth. It bridged the huge gap between Heaven and earth, between God and man. Jesus Christ, the God-Man, is the Ladder or Bridge (the Mediator) connecting heaven and earth—the only way to God (1Tim 2:3-6, Job 9:32,33, John 14:6). Jacob’s Ladder is a Type of Christ. That is why He had to be born as a man. In the incarnation God’s Ladder descended into place on earth, and God’s presence and power flowed through Him. When He died for our sins and rose again, ascending into Heaven for us, He opened up the Ladder, so that we can come to God through Jesus. He is the WAY to Heaven and the WAY Heaven comes to us - the connecting link. Now anyone who believes in Jesus can cross the gap and immediately belong in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus brings God (in His love, power and glory) to us, and us to God. This prophecy of Jesus will be completely fulfilled when He returns as King of Israel.
v1,2 On the third day (Day 7 of the sequence of days counting from John 1:19, making it Wednesday). According to Edersheim in ‘The Life and times of Jesus the Messiah’ the Jewish custom was to have weddings on Wednesdays. The celebration would then last a week. It was in the 8th month, soon after His 30th Birthday at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 1:14) which marked the approximate start of His ministry (Luke 3:23). This was indeed the normal time of year for Weddings, for it was after Harvest and Tabernacles but before the time for sowing. 

there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

v3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

v4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? (literally: “What to me and to you”) My hour has not yet come"

v5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

v6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.

v7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.

v8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it.

v9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.

v10 And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

v11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.
The Purpose of John’s Gospel is given in John 20:30,31:
“Truly Jesus did many other SIGNS in the presence of His disciples (the signs were real, they were witnessed and attested), which are not written in this book; but these (SIGNS) are written that you may BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have LIFE in His name.”

SIGNS are miracles with a message (that is more important than the manifestation) designed to reveal something about Christ, His Plan, Power and Kingdom. There are various words for miracles but this word ‘signs’ is used to emphasise what is SIGNIFIED. A sign grabs your attention in order to teach you something. The SIGNS with their message lead to FAITH which in turn leads to LIFE.

So we have: (1) SIGNS  (2) BELIEVE  (3) LIFE
(1) SIGNS - John’s Gospel is written around 8 SIGNS designed to prove Jesus is true God and to teach (demonstrate) what He will do in the life of a believer (summarised in the 8 ‘I AM’ claims). The teachings of John’s Gospel centre around these CLAIMS and SIGNS.
(2) BELIEVE - the sign results in people believing its Christ-centred message.
(3) The result of believing in His Name is LIFE (salvation: knowing God, experiencing His life: “this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ” (John 17:3).

A classic example of this process is THOMAS (in the previous verses).
John 20:26-29: “Jesus came...and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”
Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have SEEN Me (the sign of resurrection), you have BELIEVED.
BLESSED are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Thomas saw the SIGN of the resurrection and he BELIEVED. The SIGN of his hands and side showed that the crucified Jesus was risen again (His sacrifice for our sins having been accepted by God) as He and
the prophets had predicted proving He is Lord and God - the source of all Life, Salvation and Blessing. As a result of his faith Jesus said Thomas was blessed with LIFE. This example is designed to show us the faith that leads to life. What was the kind of faith that led to Thomas’ salvation? His faith was centred on Jesus Christ: that He was crucified and risen again, and that He is Lord and God, worthy of our worship. Jesus accepted his faith and worship and said that all those who believe like this are BLESSED with resurrection (eternal) life. This is saving faith. Notice Jesus said that the blessing revealed by the sign is for all who believe - not just for the original eyewitnesses of the sign. All the signs are for us to believe and receive.

The First Sign: The transformation of WATER into WINE in which He manifested His glory, proving Himself to be the Son of God, and revealed what His glory will do in our lives if we will receive (believe in) Him as God: “This beginning of SIGNS Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His (Divine) glory; and His disciples believed in Him” (v11)

“On the third day (after 1:43-51), there was a wedding (a 7 day feast) in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there” (v1). Mary was the important guest and the main organiser. It seems Mary was in charge and knew more than the others the state of things (v3). She had the authority over the servants (v5). This was very early in His ministry after having just gathered His first disciples in John 1.

“Now both Jesus and His disciples (the five disciples He had just gathered in John 1) were invited to the wedding” (v2). Mary was the main person, Jesus and others were invited also.

“And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine” (v3). This was a major problem which would result in great shame for the couple. Mary must have said this with a hidden push: ‘you should do something about it.’

“Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? (The K.J.V says: “what have I to do with you”). My hour has not yet come” (v4). Jesus words here are hard to understand. In English it sounds like He is disinterested, saying ‘no’ and coldly pushing
her away, but that can’t be right because of what she says next (to the servants) and because of what He does next (the miracle). Immediately He goes ahead with the miracle so something else must be going on here.

It is important to understand the Hebrew phrases used:
1. ‘Woman’ was a term of affection, respect and honour.

2. “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me?” is literally: “What to me and to you.” He pointed out that the situation was under her authority and it was not for Him to intrude, unless she delegated authority to Him, releasing Him to work. Her hint and her look was insufficient for Him to act. He respected and worked under authority. He had not yet been given the authority to act. Whenever Jesus spoke of ‘my time’ or ‘my hour’, He was referring to His death, resurrection and ascension to God’s right hand when He would be glorified and exalted as Lord of all and everything would change (see John 7:1, 6, 8, 30; 8:20 which speak of His HOUR or His TIME as the time of His death, which had not yet fully come; see also John 12:23-28 where Jesus speaks just before the Cross of the impending hour for Him to be glorified, after first submitting to death. He says that it was for this very purpose that He came to this hour. In other words the whole purpose of His mission was focused on and moving towards the climax of His death and resurrection when redemption would be accomplished; see also John 13:1 which says: ‘His hour had come to depart from this world to the Father’. In John 17:1 Jesus prayed on the night before His death: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.”

Therefore when Mary hinted: ‘you are the Messiah, do something’, Jesus said: “What to you me? It’s up to you to give me the authority.” His answer implied He could help if she gave Him the permission (right) to act. We know Mary got the message, because of what she said next: “His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it” (v5). She clearly was in charge of the
Feast. Mary was in authority for the feast arrangements. She delegated authority to Jesus, putting all the servants under Him. Even Jesus functioned under authority, respecting freewill, only moving in people’s lives when they requested, when they gave Him permission. Healings were usually initiated when they came to Him and worshipped Him, gave him authority to act in their homes. He never violated true authority. As soon as Mary gave Him the right, He worked the wonder!

The MIRACLE of TRANSFORMATION (v6-10): “Now there were set there SIX WATERPOTS of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing 20-30 gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.” And they took it. (Imagine how nervous they would be serving up water to the manager! He had to taste it to make sure it was O.K as part of his job). When the master of the feast (the chief servant, like the headwaiter or hotel-manager) had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the Bridegroom and he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior (because they could not taste the difference by then). You have kept the good (best) wine until now!”

Since this is a SIGN we must look at the MESSAGE it teaches:
First: by this first sign, Jesus affirmed MARRIAGE and the celebration of life. He is no killjoy. The running out of wine would have been a disaster, killing the party and the couple’s reputation. In those days the wine was much more dilute than now and helped to make the water hygienic. Wine represents joy and satisfaction, and the true wine (joy) of life comes from the Spirit (Psa 23:5, Acts 2:12-17). “Do not get drunk with WINE, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the SPIRIT” (Eph 5:18). Drunkenness is condemned for it is a substitute for drinking in the Spirit. The ‘wine had run out’ states our human condition without Christ. ‘Natural wine’ brings a certain happiness but that runs out. Eventually if you just focus on the things of this life you come up empty. The satisfaction does not last. But when it ran out and they turned to Christ and asked Him, He filled their cups with the
best wine (abundant life) that satisfies and never runs dry. Jesus came to give us life abundantly (John 10:10) so that our cup runs over: “You have anointed my head with oil; my cup (of God’s wine) overflows” (Psalm 23:5). The wine that Jesus gives is the best wine that will never run out!

Second: it reveals Christ’s power to TRANSFORM men.
The starting material was unpromising: The 6 Clay Pots picture man (six is the number of man, falling short of spiritual perfection symbolised by the number 7). They were empty: God made the human body from clay, in order to contain human life (man’s spirit-soul) as well as God’s Spirit. Water represents natural human life (which becomes stagnant when separated from God’s life). As Jesus said in John 3:5,6, man’s first birth is of water (flesh), and he needs a second birth of spirit. His natural state is a soulish life (water), without spiritual life (wine).

This sign is a demonstration of Christ’s power to recreate us in the New Birth and transform us from deep within. In this sign His glory is revealed as the Creator, the Son of God, with the power and willingness to create and transform men. What did His glory do? The Spirit of God moved over the waters, in Genesis 1, transforming them into wine. As He hovered over the waters at the first Creation, so now the Spirit hovers over our waters (our spirit) to bring forth a new creation. The miracle happened invisibly inside the clay-pots, changing the inside, but the outside looked much the same.

This is a picture of the rebirth of our spirit by the Spirit (this is explained further in John 3, which is chronologically the first teaching we have of Jesus, and thus it is the foundational teaching of the New Testament). “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God....Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind (a picture of the Spirit) blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (v3-8). The rebirth of the spirit is by the Spirit- invisible, but with visible results.

It can only happen when we give Christ the right or authority
to do it (as Mary did). That is why the major part of the preparation for the miracle was about the giving of authority to Jesus. When we call Him Lord then the Spirit enters into our clay-pot and turns our water into wine - He breathes into us His eternal life, filling us with the wine of the Holy Spirit. He gives us ETERNAL (the God-kind of) life. The sign was given so we may believe in Jesus as the One who has the power to transform our inner-being, and so receive Him as our Lord (as Mary did). Then through our faith He gives us LIFE, His glory is released into us to do the very miracle revealed by the sign.

So the SIGN says Jesus will do this for us too if we will receive Him! It teaches that believing in Jesus results in His glory manifested in us, so that we receive eternal life and inner transformation by the New Birth changing our life from the old (natural) Water into new (spiritual) Wine.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life” (John 4:13,14).

“As many as received Him, to them He gave the right (authority) to become children of God (this is our legal adoption as sons), even to those who believe in His Name (His Person and Work), who were born (regenerated), not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but (born) of God” (John 1:12,13). Our new-birth is neither based on racial, national or family identity or any natural ability (blood), nor upon our willpower or works (the will of the flesh), nor can it be conferred by other men or institutions (the will of man). It must be directly and personally received from God through faith in Christ. When we receive Christ we are first legally forgiven, justified and adopted (literally: ‘placed’) as sons of God, then we are powerfully regenerated by the Spirit of God, so that God is also literally the Father of our spirit. “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2Corinthians 5:17)

You must give God the right to change your water into wine, to manifest His glory in your spirit, soul, body, life, work and relationships.
5. Jesus Cleanses the Temple (John 2:12-25)

v12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days. (Capernaum later on became His ministry-base, but not yet).

v13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand (April/May AD 30) and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

v14 And He found in the Temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. The Temple authorities had made the Temple a moneymaking operation. They had to certify any sacrificial animal as without blemish, and so rather than risking their animal being rejected, people had to buy them at the Temple to be sure they would be approved. Their monopoly meant they could overcharge. Moreover, normal coins with the image of Caesar could not be used in the ‘holy’ Temple and so the animals had to be bought with special Temple-money, hence the need for moneychangers. Again, exchange rates were fixed in favour of the Temple-authorities! In the face of such corruption in high-places, Jesus made a symbolic act that showed God’s displeasure and warned of coming judgement on that Temple administration:

v15,16 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the Temple (He must have been full of the power and zeal of God, to terrify all the (hundreds of) people and officials into fleeing the Temple!), with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make ‘My Father's house’ a house of merchandise!"

Here He makes a claim of unique Sonship, calling God: ‘My Father.’ He repeated this act of prophetic judgement exactly 3 years later, four days before Passover AD33 (Matthew 21:12-16, Mark 11:15-18, Luke 19:45-48), because the authorities had not repented. He was announcing the overthrow by God of the old, corrupt Temple order, and its replacement by the New Creation Temple of redeemed men in Christ. This would be accomplished through His death and resurrection.

v17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written (in Psalm 69:9) "Zeal for Your House has eaten Me up (consumed Me)."

The Jewish Temple was appointed by God and was still the Father’s House. However it was just symbolic of, and a preparation for
the true Temple (Dwelling-Place) of God: Redeemed Man. That true Temple was already present in prototype form in the Person of Jesus. The quotation is from a Messianic Psalm that predicts the Messiah’s suffering and death for His people, the ultimate Temple (House) of God. His passionate zeal for God’s Temple caused Him to suffer and die for us.

v18  So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What Sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"
In other words: “Prove you have the authority of God behind your claims.”

v19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this Temple (pointing to Himself, signifying His death), and in three days I will raise it up."
At His trial, these words were twisted to mean Jesus was threatening to destroy the Temple (Matthew 26:61), but He was predicting that they would put Him to death and that in three days He would rise again. He was already referring to Himself as the true Temple of God (see v21). Thus in response to their request for a sign, He gives them His greatest Sign: His death and resurrection after 3 days, that He would accomplish 3 years later. Notice His claim to Deity here, for only God can raise the dead, and He is saying that He will raise Himself from the dead. Some scriptures say it is the Father who raised up Jesus, others say the Son did it, others the Spirit. This reflects the fact that every act of God involves all three Persons of the Trinity working together in unity.

v20  Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"
This allows us to date this event to the Passover of AD 30 (see Finegin: Handbook of Biblical Chronology). The word used for Temple refers to the central building rather than the Temple Courts (which continued to be under reconstruction until AD 62 at least). The rebuilding of the Temple itself (according to Josephus) by Herod was began in his 18th year Nisan 20BC-Nisan 19BC, and was completed in a year and a half.  v20 is better translated: “This Temple has been built (and has stood) for 46 years.” Therefore these words were spoken in the spring of AD 30.

v21  But He was speaking of the Temple of His body.
They of course had misunderstood which Temple He was talking about. He was predicting His physical resurrection. Those that represented the old Temple, would try to destroy the new Temple (Christ).
Even though it looked like they succeeded, the new Temple was eternal and would be resurrected after 3 days. Then judgement would fall on the old Temple, it would be overthrown and destroyed (AD 70), but God would have a new Temple on earth (the Church).

v22 Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said. Jesus did not just rise from the dead after 3 days but He also predicted it! The disciple remembered all of Jesus’ prophecies about this and it greatly strengthened their faith.

v23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the Feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. This seems to be the time when Jesus came to the attention of the public through His cleansing of the Temple, His teachings and miracles at the Feast, which was attended by all Israel. He would have 3 more years of public ministry until His death at Passover 33 AD.

v24,25 But Jesus did not commit (trust) Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. Although many believed in Him, He did not let Himself get carried away by their excitement about Him. It would seem their faith was superficial, that they were more interested in signs than following Him. Jesus knew what was in human nature through sin, and that the human heart can be fickle and unreliable, and that their apparent love for Him could quickly melt away, and only God’s grace could overcome that.

As God He also knew what was in each person’s heart. However, He chose to live as a man under the limitations of His humanity (He laid aside His glory which included His omniscience), so that He depended on the Father to reveal to Him what He needed to know. Even so, as a perfect Man, led by the Holy-Spirit, He was able to accurately discern the hearts of men. He knows our heart, and He knows how much He can trust us and commit to us. Let God’s grace work in you so that He can trust you and work with you, knowing that you will be faithful to follow Him and do His will.
There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again.'

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.

If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practising evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."
The signs of Jesus were dramatic messages to show who He is and what He will do for those who receive Him. They are given to bring people to faith in Christ, so that they themselves will receive life (“these (SIGNS) are written that you may BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have LIFE in His name” -John 20:31)

In other words, He will accomplish the Sign in the life of those who believe in Him. His first SIGN (turning WATER into WINE) shows that Jesus is the Son of God, with the power to recreate and transform our inner-being. Thus when we believe in Him and this sign of turning water into wine, and receive Him, then He performs it in us. This is called the NEW BIRTH or REGENERATION. The signs are offered to whosoever will receive Him. We saw in John 2:1-11 that Jesus has to get our authority (permission) to perform the miracle in us. Next in John 3 we come to the detailed teaching on the New-Birth that is connected to this first SIGN:

“Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews (we will see that he was the main Bible-Teacher in Israel, v10) the same came to Him by night (to have some quality time alone with Jesus), and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a Teacher sent from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, except God be with him” (v1,2). Nicodemus accepts Jesus as a Teacher sent from God, but does not yet believe He is the Christ - but He will soon enough. He receives Him as a Teacher and so Jesus is a Teacher to him (as John 3 demonstrates). God can give to us according to our faith. If we receive Jesus as our Saviour, Strength, Healer, Wisdom, Life - then He will be all these things to us also. Jesus is leading Nicodemus to trust Him as his Saviour and Source of eternal life.

Jesus teaches spiritual things by analogies with natural things:

“If I told you earthly things and you believe not, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” (v12). First the natural, then the spiritual. In this talk He uses: (1) The BIRTH of a baby, to describe the miracle of salvation, our regeneration by the FATHER of spirits.

(2) The BLOWING of the WIND, to describe the work of the HOLY-SPIRIT in accomplishing the New-Birth.

(3) The SERPENT on a POLE (an Old Testament Type of Christ, when all who looked in faith to God’s provision of salvation received life), to reveal the basis of the New-Birth (the CROSS of CHRIST)
and the kind of FAITH that receives Eternal Life.
*Notice the Trinitarian structure of this teaching of Jesus. Salvation is from the Father, through the Son and His sacrifice, in the power of the Spirit.

*Picture (1) - The Work of the Father: BIRTH (v3-7).
“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God’” (v3). Jesus cut straight to the question on his heart, the main issue. He wanted to be where Jesus was, to have His revelation and experience of God. Jesus made a shocking statement: Although he was a educated, good, decent and cultivated man he was outside the Kingdom of God. To be good by man’s standards is not enough to be meet God’s standards of entry. You have to be BORN AGAIN, as a new creation to be in the Kingdom. “Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (v4). ‘How can I have completely new start? How can this be after all these years. My character is already formed. Surely, it’s impossible to turn back the clock.’

“Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a man is (1) born of water and (2) the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God!’” (v5). Here Jesus clarifies this second birth. The first birth you must have is a natural birth coming forth from the water of your mother’s womb - the birth of your flesh, making you a citizen of earth. The second birth you must have is a spiritual birth coming forth out of the womb of the Spirit of God - the birth of your spirit, making you a citizen of heaven. Without this second birth you don’t belong in Heaven - you must be born into the Kingdom to belong there. (If I go to China to live as a citizen there, I would be turned away for I would have to be born there).

This interpretation is confirmed in v6: “That which is (1) born of the flesh is flesh (the first birth); and that which is (2) born of the Spirit is spirit (the second birth).” It is the rebirth of our spirit (2Cor 5:17). Our first birth equips us to live on earth. The new-birth is of the spirit and so equips you to live in a new realm - God’s Kingdom in the Spirit. “Marvel not that I said to you, ‘You must be born again” (v7). It is not an option but a necessity. Nicodemus was picked to show that even the best and most polished natural man is good enough to enter on his own
merits. He needs the new birth to enter, for without it he does not belong.

To belong in the kingdom of earth we must be born into it with an earthly nature generated from our earthly father. To be in the Kingdom of Heaven we must be born into it with a heavenly nature which can only be generated from our Heavenly Father (we receive the love-nature of God in the New Birth, our reborn spirit possesses eternal life: even the love and life of God - see Romans 5:5, Galatians 5:22,23, John 3:16). “As many as received Him (Christ), He gave the right to become children of God, even those who believe on His name: who were born ... of God” (John 1:12,13). Because we enter by birth, salvation is all of GRACE not works. You can’t take the credit for your birth! It was your Mother’s work which you just received. Likewise the New-Birth is all God’s work not ours - we can’t earn or deserve it- it is an act of God that we simply receive.

How does God perform the New-Birth? He answers this in the next picture.

*Picture (2): The Work of the Holy-Spirit, whose action is compared to the WIND. “The WIND blows where it will,and you hear its sound, but know not from where it comes, and to where it goes: so it is with every one that is born of the SPIRIT” (v8).

The word ‘pneuma’, translated WIND is also the word for SPIRIT. Both wind and the Spirit are invisible but they communicate energy and produce visible results. Jesus is saying that the New Birth happens when the invisible wind of the Spirit blows into our spirit to recreate it. It is God’s work and energy that does it, not man’s. We just receive the action of the wind (Spirit). We can’t see Him but He is real. He moves in and brings change on the inside that will show on the outside.

The Spirit is a Person, Whom we cannot control, but He always comes when we ask or invite Him: “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them who ask Him?” (Luke 11:12,13). The wind moves according to laws, from high to low pressure. When we inhale, we set up a low-pressure condition in our lungs into which the fresh wind blows. When the right conditions of receptivity (humility and faith in Christ) are set up in our heart, the Spirit moves in and works His miracle for we shall see that whosoever believes in Christ (calling upon Him in humble faith) receives eternal life, through the action of the Spirit.
“Nicodemus answered and said to him, ‘How can these things be?’” (v9) That is: “By what process does this happen? How can I have the Spirit blow into me?”

*Picture (3) - The Work of the Son on the Cross* (the Brass-Serpent), purchasing our salvation, and the LOOK of FAITH by which we receive it.

We have seen that the New-Birth originates from the Father. He sends the Spirit to accomplish it. Now we will see that the Spirit blows from the Father through the Son. The Spirit comes through the Son, on the basis of the Work of the Son (in death and resurrection), so that all who look upon the Son (believing) receive the Spirit.

Firstly, Jesus establishes His unique authority to speak on the Kingdom of God and how to enter it: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you ‘the teacher of Israel’, and you understand not these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, ‘We (the Godhead) speak of what we know, and bear witness of what we have seen; and you (the nation of Israel as a whole, not Nicodemus himself) receive not our witness. If I told you earthly things and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?’ And no one has ascended into heaven (by his own works and righteousness), except He (God’s eternal Son) who descended from Heaven (in the incarnation), even the Son of man (Jesus), who is (also) in Heaven (eternally, as the Son of God)” (v10-12).

Jesus is the only man authorised and qualified to tell us how to enter God’s Kingdom, for He lives eternally in Heaven. He alone knows the Way to Heaven. He alone is the Way. He alone has the required righteousness. He alone came down from Heaven to earth to bring us to Heaven with Him. He proved it by ascending to Heaven so we must listen to Him.

Having prepared us, He now reveals the basis for our salvation (His death on the Cross), and how we must believe in order to receive life: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up (on the Cross, to bear the judgement for our sins) that whosoever believes (looks in faith upon Him) may have (receive) eternal LIFE (the life of God) in him. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Hi should not perish, but have eternal LIFE (as a present possession,
produced by the action of the Spirit upon us). **For God sent not the Son into the world to condemn the world** (but rather to condemn the sin of the world in Him) **but that the world should be saved through Him** (through Jesus bearing our sin and condemnation in our place)” (v14-17). Here Jesus preaches the Gospel: that the Son of God who came from heaven and became a man, will die on the Cross for our sins before ascending back to Heaven, so that whoever believes (trusts) in Him (as Saviour and Lord), having seen Him die on the Cross for their sins and rising again, will receive from Him forgiveness and eternal life.

Jesus said that this salvation was foreshadowed in Numbers 21:5-9, where because of their sin (v5), **fiery serpents** (representing sin) entered and bit the people, bringing much death (v6). For the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). When they repented, Moses prayed for them for their salvation (healing, v7) and the Lord answered and said, “**Make a fiery serpent, and set it upon a standard and it shall come to pass, that every one who is bitten** (by the serpent of sin), **when he sees it, shall live** (he receives forgiveness and life).’ **Moses made a serpent of brass upon a standard: and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he LOOKED upon the serpent of brass, he LIVED**” (v8).

In His answer the Lord was revealing how He would provide salvation for all men from sin and death (not just Israel). **Brass is a symbol of Judgement.** When Israel looked upon the brass serpent, believing and obeying the word of God through Moses, they saw their sin removed from them and judged. Thus they received FORGIVENESS and LIFE by faith.

Jesus said that He would be as the brass serpent lifted up (v14, see also Rom 8:3, 2Cor5:21). He would be our Sin-Bearer (remember this was spoken during the Passover week), lifted up on the Cross bearing all our sin (hence He is as the serpent lifted up on the pole), and be judged in our place (hence the serpent was of brass). In this way He fulfilled the first Messianic prophecy (Gen3:15). He paid the penalty and suffered the just punishment for our sins, so that when we hear the Gospel and LOOK in faith to the Son dying for our sins on the Cross, then we receive LIFE from the Spirit of Life. John 3:16 summarises it all: “**For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son** (the love of God the Father is supremely shown in that He gave His Son to die for us on the Cross..."
- see v15), that **whosoever believes on Him** (anyone who looks to Jesus in faith, seeing Him die and be judged for his sins) **should not perish** (by being condemned to eternal destruction in hell), **but have eternal life** (through the wind of the Spirit regenerating his spirit). Salvation is for ‘whosoever’ will accept it by faith.

The wind of the Spirit is breathed out from the Father and blows (proceeds) through the Son and His work on the Cross, and enters us (if we believe) accomplishing the New Birth in us. (1) **ASK the FATHER** for the Spirit, (2) **SEE (LOOK to) the SON and His Work** -seeing the Spirit flowing through the crucified, risen and ascended SON and (3) **RECEIVE the SPIRIT**. Say: “I receive the Holy-Spirit who is given to me from the Father, through the Son.” You may find it helps to physically breath in as you receive the Spirit, purely as an aid to faith.

Verses 18-21 contrast believers with unbelievers in destiny and lifestyle:

(1) **Different destinies**: “He who believes on Him is not condemned. He who believes not has been condemned already, because he has not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the LIGHT (Jesus Christ) has come into the world and men loved the darkness (sin) rather than the LIGHT; for their works were evil.”

Believers trust in Christ who bore all judgement on their sin, and so are saved from condemnation. Unbelievers are judged because they reject Jesus Christ (the true Light and Salvation of man). He is their only salvation from the deadly power and guilt of sin, and so by rejecting Him they reject salvation. They must stand before God on their own merits and this means certain condemnation. Their sinfulness before God is proved by their rejection of God’s Light (Jesus Christ).

(2) **Different Lifestyles**: “For everyone who does evil (an unbeliever) hates the LIGHT and comes not to the LIGHT (Jesus), lest his works should be reproved. But (in contrast) he (a believer) who does the TRUTH (of the Word) comes (continually) to the LIGHT, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.”

The characteristic lifestyle of believers is they open their life up to God’s light for correction, ready to confess any sin and be cleansed, so that they may learn to please and glorify Him. Unbelievers by contrast go their own way, independently of God.

v22-24 After these things (after Passover AD 30) Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea (from May AD 30 to January/February 31), and there He remained with them and baptised. Now John (the Baptist) also was baptising in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there (notice this confirmation that baptism is by full immersion as the meaning of the word itself teaches). And they came and were baptised. For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

v25,26 Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan.." (Notice John had spent some quality time with Jesus in the month after His Baptism and Temptation, before John identified Him as the Lamb of God in 1:19-34. This time spent with Jesus explains his depth of insight shown in 1:19-34 and 3:22-36. He would have asked about the meaning of Christ’s baptism and through that found out about His future death and resurrection as the Lamb of God). "...to whom you have testified - behold, He is baptising, and all are coming to Him!" It seems that in their dispute with John’s disciples, the Jews used the occasion to sow discord by arousing their competitiveness, pointing out how Jesus had adopted John’s methods and was successfully taking John’s crowds. Actually they were ministering together in unity. By admitting that John testified of Jesus, John’s disciples convicted themselves here,. This should have led them into following Jesus, but being drawn by John’s personality they missed the meaning and purpose of his message which was to point men to Christ. As a result out of loyalty to John, they were even tempted into be competitive with Jesus.

John’s answer shows again his humility before the supremacy of Christ:

v27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven." John was content with the ministry God had given him. What matters is receiving the call and anointing God gives you, and then faithfully discharging it. It is foolish to compete with others who have been given a different call and anointing. All your striving and competing and imitating in the flesh, to have a ministry like others and bigger than others is futile because you can only receive what God gives.

v28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, "I am not the Christ,' but, "I have been sent before Him.'
John was the forerunner of the Christ, so they should not be surprised that the ministry of Jesus was growing and John’s was declining. In fact this showed the success of John’s ministry of turning men to Christ. In ministry if we lead people to look to Christ rather than to us - this is success. If others after us seem to do better than us - that too is success.

v29 “He who has the Bride is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.”

The Bride consists of the believers. The Bridegroom is Christ, who came to call His Bride, showing His love by laying His life down for her. John had a special role as the Friend of the Bridegroom, who acted under His directions as the go-between making the arrangements for the ceremony, setting the stage for Bride and Bridegroom to come together. The Friend does not want to draw the Bride to himself, but to ensure she is united with the Bridegroom. So when he hears the Bridegroom come calling His Bride and sees the Bride respond and come to Him, he rejoices because his job has been successful, his mission has been fulfilled.

v30 “He must increase, but I must decrease.” This again reveals the humility of John. We can apply this saying to our lives. It is not about us, but about Jesus. We want His will, His power, His presence to increase in our lives, and we want our ‘I,I,I’ (our self-centredness and pride) to decrease. John knew his ministry was temporary and subordinate to Christ’s. He was telling his disciples that Jesus’ ministry must continue to increase and his ministry would continue to decrease but it was OK, for it was God’s will (John was arrested later that year).

v31,32 “He (Jesus) who comes from above (Heaven) is above all (Lord)”

John declares Christ’s supremacy and authority based on His heavenly origins, His pre-existence and Deity. He is not to be placed on the same level as John or any other man. He is in a different category altogether: “he who is of the earth (John and all other men) is earthly and speaks of the earth (he is limited by his earthly experience and speaks from an earthly viewpoint). (But) He who comes from heaven (Jesus) is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies... (Jesus came as the eternal Son from heaven and so speaks from a full knowledge of God)” Therefore the words of Jesus surpass those of all others, for they are the direct personal words of God.
Faith and Unbelief (there can only be two responses to Christ’s testimony).

v32-33: “And what He (Jesus) has seen and heard (as the Son from Heaven) that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.”

Even though He has given His clear, reliable testimony, mankind as a whole rejects it, because of sin (1Cor2:14). However due to God’s grace alone through the Holy-Spirit, some are enabled to believe His testimony and to receive Him: “He who has received His testimony (believes in Christ) has certified that God is true.” He attests that God is truthful, for the testimony of Christ is not the words of a man but the words of God (also his transformed life confirms the truth of Christ’s words):

v34 “For He (Jesus) whom God has sent (this phrase confirms Christ’s Pre-existence and Deity, as well as the Father’s sovereignty in planning and initiating the Son’s incarnation) speaks the words of God (even though He became a man, and spoke from His humanity) for God does not give the Spirit by measure.” Any other finite and sinful man whom God anointed with the Holy-Spirit to speak for Him, can only have a limited measure of the Spirit (and he must be careful not to go beyond his anointing). The perfect God-man, however, was able to receive and have a full endowment of the Spirit upon His humanity. Therefore, His words are the undiluted, uncompromised words of God. He was anointed with the Spirit without limit. When He ascended on high, He poured out this fullness of the Spirit upon the Church, so that this anointing is distributed among all of us. Each of us has only a portion, so that in unity together the full anointing can flow.

v35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. This gives us great insight into the relationship between Father and Son in the Trinity. They are united in perfect love. The Father is the Initiator, the Source of all life and authority. He loves the Son and gives all things to the Son. He entrusts the Son with all authority over Creation. Therefore, your attitude and relationship to the Son defines your relationship to God:

v36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life (possessed already, to be fully manifested later throughout eternity); and he who does not believe in the Son shall not (ever) see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

He is already under condemnation, awaiting the full manifestation of God’s wrath in judgement that will continue throughout eternity.

Notice the contrast between faith and unbelief: Receiving the Son (faith) is accepting His word and trusting (committing) oneself to His authority as Lord, which results in receiving eternal life. Rejecting the Son (unbelief), is rejecting God and His authority and resulting in rejecting His eternal life).

v1-5 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptise, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He had to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

v6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour (6pm).

v7,8 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." (For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food).

v9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?"

For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

v10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

v11 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?"

v12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

v13,14 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

v15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

v16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

v17,18 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You have well said, "I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

v19,20 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."
v21-24 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

v25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

v26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

v27 And at this point His disciples came, and they marvelled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

v28-30 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

v31 In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

v32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know"

v33 Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?"

v34,35 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

v36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

v37 For in this the saying is true: "One sows and another reaps.'

v38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not laboured; others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours."

v39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, 'He told me all that I ever did'

v40-42 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."
“When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptising more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptise, but his disciples), he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee” (v1-3). The other Gospels tell us also that John was put into prison at that time, and that when Jesus heard this He returned to Galilee (Matt 4:12, Mark 1:14). Up to this point, John had been the focus of attention for the Jewish authorities, but now that he was in prison, Jesus knew they would turn their attention and guns on Him, especially now that they knew Jesus had become more popular than John. So, this was the God-given signal for Jesus to begin His Galilean ministry, for He now returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14).

“And He must needs pass through Samaria (this was not because it was the direct route, for Jews usually avoided Samaria. He was compelled by the will of God to witness in Samaria. The time was February AD 31). Then came He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there (see Genesis 33:18,19). Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey (He was human as well as Divine), sat on the well: and it was about the sixth hour (at 6pm, see 1:39)” (v4-6).

“There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me some to drink’. (For His disciples were gone away to the city to buy meat). Then said the woman of Samaria to him, ‘How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans” (v7-9). Jesus started a conversation that resulted in the conversion of the whole town.

Jesus had to overcome all kinds of barriers to reach this woman with the Gospel: (1) Racially Samaritans and Jews had a mutual hatred. The Jews saw themselves as superior to the ‘half-breed impure’ Samaritans -who were the result of intermarriage between Jews and those brought in by the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations of 722 BC and 586 BC. (2) Moreover Jews saw women as inferior. For these reasons she was amazed that Jesus wanted to talk to her. (3) Also she had local religious traditions she was proud of (including Jacob and his well, and Mt.Gerazim where they worshipped), which were a barrier to the Gospel.
(4) She was also living in immorality. Although popular with the men, she was shunned by women, and so had to go alone at noon to the well. Jesus was not put off by all this, but lovingly proceeded to win her to God. As a result of this encounter Jesus demonstrated Himself to be: ‘the Christ, the Saviour of the world’ (the Saviour of every kind of people, not just of Israel) (v42).

Here Jesus gave us a classic example of how to witness.  

(1) He got her attention, making contact by starting where she was in her thoughts and life: ‘Give me some to drink’ (v7), before moving the topic from physical to spiritual water (v10).

(2) Then He appealed to her curiosity, getting her interested to hear more by announcing Good-News: “Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and Who it is who says to you, ‘Give me to drink’; you would have asked of Him and He would have given you living water” (v10). He speaks of superior water - the living (flowing) water of a spring rather than the still water of a well. In John 7:37-39 this living-water is the life of the Holy-Spirit. Notice that the Good-news is that salvation (living water) is the GIFT of God, to be received by faith (it is not earned by our works: “He who is thirsty, let him come, whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev 22:17). The Giver is Jesus - we must come to Him to receive this gift of life: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to him who is thirsty to drink freely of the fountain of the water of life” (Rev 21:6).

“The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from WHERE then have you that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his children and cattle?” (v11,12).

“You say you have a superior supply of flowing water, that springs up rather than having to draw it from a 100 ft well? Where is this Spring?”

(3) Next He appealed to her desire: “Jesus answered her, ‘Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again (this is true of anything in the natural that is our source of satisfaction - in her case: men). But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall GIVE him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be IN HIM a SPRING of water SPRINGING up to everlasting life” (v13,14).
The water He gives is superior, being the very life of God. Its longevity is superior, being everlasting in satisfaction. The supply is superior, for it is a spring, not a well. The location is superior. She had asked: WHERE?
The answer was amazing: It will be IN US!
In the New-Covenant, our recreated spirit is an internal, artesian spring, with self-regenerating, everlasting life springing up to God in the Holy-Spirit (that’s you on the inside if you’ve received Christ!).

(4) Next He convicted her of her sin and need for salvation:
“The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come here to draw.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come back here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, I have no husband: for you have had five husbands; and he who you now have is not your husband: in that you spoke truly’ (v15-18).

By a word of knowledge, He put His finger on her sin - to convict her of her need for repentance and salvation. She had been drinking from the wrong wells. Notice that living with someone is not marriage in Jesus’ book. She was cohabiting but unmarried. God wants worship in TRUTH (according to God’s Word, v23) and immorality does not fit with that. People think they can dump the truth of the Bible and still worship God, but it does not please Him (for example, having homosexual priests and bishops in the Church).

“The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet’ (because of His accurate word of knowledge concerning her). Our fathers worshipped in this mountain (Gerazim); and you (Jews) say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship (it is common for people to throw red herrings when it gets personal. Jesus answers this without getting off course in getting His message to her). She had asked: ‘Which is God’s true Temple where He should be worshipped?’

Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour comes, when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, (shall you) worship the Father (a prophecy of Samaritan salvation). You (Samaritans) worship what you don’t know. We (Jews) know who we worship: for SALVATION (Christ) is of the Jews” (v19-22). Jesus was not one to fudge or compromise the truth to unify religions, as
if they were all equally valid. He answered her question straight: ‘you are wrong’ (for it was the Jewish Temple that had been Divinely authorised).

“BUT the hour is coming (there is a new better thing coming) and now is (here in prototype form, for in Jesus it was already fulfilled), when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (v23,24).

Worship ‘in spirit’ refers to the worship constantly springing up from the reborn human spirit (see v14), filled (energised) by the Holy-Spirit. Worship ‘in truth’ denotes the reality of this direct spirit to Spirit communion (in contrast to shadow-rituals), as well as worship according to the Bible. We worship the God of the Bible in His way - the God who is revealed in the Bible (the Triune God, the God of love and justice, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty - not ‘All-Matey’!).

Jesus was announcing a new Temple development and worship that He was introducing which would replace the old buildings, for now God was moving into human Temples (this was His real hearts desire all the time - Temple buildings were preparatory teaching tools which established the pattern for our understanding). This true worship will no longer be about outward rituals in ‘holy’ buildings with a conscious separation between the worshipper and God, but will happen within his own being in spirit and in truth in personal, direct spirit to Spirit communion with God. In other words, MAN himself would be the TEMPLE of GOD, indwelt by God’s Spirit and dedicated to God’s worship and glory. His spirit, mind and body is to be dedicated to worship God in truth (reality). This is the ultimate Temple and the true worship that the Father has always been seeking, not beautiful buildings.

When Jesus said: “and now is”, He declared that this was already being fulfilled. But how could this be before the barrier between God and man was removed by the Cross (for sin meant God could not indwell man)? The answer is that it was fulfilled in Jesus Himself. In His humanity, He was already the true Temple indwelt by God’s Spirit, dedicated to worship and prayer, out of whom flowed rivers of living water to bless people, especially all who came to Him. Jesus was the prototype new Temple
for He was saying that the time was soon coming (after His death and resurrection), when there would be many such Temples where true worship will take place (they would be multiplied). This was brought about by the New Birth, in which man’s spirit is recreated and indwelt by God’s Spirit. He had made this claim to be the true Temple in the earth in John 2:19-21: “Jesus said, "Destroy this Temple and in 3 days I will raise it up." The Jews said: ‘It’s taken 46 years to build this Temple and will You raise it up in 3 days?’ But He spoke of the Temple of His body.” These new Temples are eternal, because if killed they will be resurrected! Jesus’ ministry was a transition time, for the Jewish Temple was still in action, but when He died and paid the penalty for sin, His declaration: ‘it is finished’ signified the end of that old Temple (the veil torn from above showed that the barrier between God and man was now removed). Now God no longer needed to live in the shadow Temple, He could move into the real Temples, that He had desired all the time - PEOPLE. So, fifty days later the Spirit came to the same place (the Temple) and filled His new Temples to overflowing instead (Acts 2). Now every believer in Christ is also a Temple (1Corinth 3:16, 6:19; 2Corinth 6:16; John 7:37-39; Ephesians 2:22). Now we have the amazing privilege of being God’s holy Temples, houses of prayer, where God lives and manifests His glory.

“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah comes, who is called Christ: when He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you AM HE (Messiah)!’” (v25,26). Thus He revealed the Gospel to her: Who He was and His free-gift of eternal life (see v10).

Next the story focuses on the carnal disciples (v27-42). “At this time came His disciples marvelling (shocked) that He talked with the woman: yet no man said, ‘What do you seek?’ or, ‘Why do you talk with her?’ The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city and said to the men (not the women!, for she knew all the men, but was not popular with the women), ‘Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did (there is humour here, for this got the men’s attention and some were worried about what might be revealed!), is not this the Christ? Then they (all the men) went out of the city, and came to Him” (v27-30). Jesus had lifted her eyes to from the natural (water) to the spiritual realities(of eternal life) and so she left the water behind, such was her urgency to witness to Christ. But look at the disciples.
They were obsessed with the natural; their prejudice made them insensitive to the needs of the Samaritans and blind to the great spiritual opportunities, thinking that the Samaritans were not ready to hear them. So, they had walked through a town of people ready to hear about Jesus and be saved, but they did not know it, only thinking of food for their stomachs.

“Mean While His disciples asked Him, ‘Master, eat’ (food again!). But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you know not of’. Therefore said the disciples to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him food?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work’ (v31-34). We first enjoy the WATER of salvation then the solid satisfying FOOD of doing God’s work (witnessing)

“Say not, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes harvest.’ This tells us the timing of Jesus in Samaria. It must have been February 31 AD, 4 months before the wheat harvest in June. This was a double ‘word of knowledge’ Jesus had about their natural conversation. They were saying this as they walked back through the unripened fields of wheat, but they had also said the parallel thing about the Samaritans: “these people are not ripe, they are not ready to hear us, it is pointless telling them of Jesus.”) They were so focused on natural things, on their food and the state of the natural (wheat) harvest, that they were blind to the spiritual harvest of the people around them, that were ripe and ready to hear the Gospel and be reaped (saved) and placed into God’s Kingdom (the barn).

“Behold, I say to you, ‘Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest’ (ready for reaping)” (v35). This had a double meaning. He was telling them to lift their eyes up above the natural, onto the spiritual, so they could see the higher realities. More specifically He is telling them to stop looking down at their food and look up at the whole town of people coming to Jesus across the fields (v30). The Samaritan harvest was coming to Jesus right then. In fact, this mass of people, clothed in white, looked exactly like a field of wheat ripe for harvest and they were indeed ready for reaping as we shall see. Jesus was telling the disciples that this town was ready to be saved, but their carnality meant they missed their chance to reap the harvest. He is also telling us to lift our eyes above the natural and see the opportunities for leading people to Jesus, whether it is through sowing or reaping.

He goes on to say that the woman got the reward instead of them, for
reaping this harvest: “And the reaper receives wages (eternal rewards) and gathers fruit (souls) to life eternal: that both the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. And here is that saying true, ‘one sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap (the harvest in Samaria) where you bestowed no labour, others laboured, and you are entering into their labours” (v36-38). Jesus had sent them into the town to reap, but they missed it. Sometimes people are not ready, so when we witness we are sowing seed. This is crucial, for there can be no reaping unless there has previously been some sowing. So when someone reaps a soul, bringing him into eternal life, he is building upon the work of the sower and both sower and reaper share the joy and the reward of the harvest. So when you witness in the love of God, you are doing God’s work in the harvest field and will receive great reward, whether you reap (see them come to Christ) or not (because then you are still sowing the seed - the word of life).

The Samaritan Harvest and the Saviour of the World (v39-42):
“And many Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying (witness) of the woman, who testified, ‘He told me all that ever I did’. (The woman was the reaper for this town instead of the disciples, because she had the courage to testify and it was a direct result of her testimony that they came to Jesus and believed on Him).
So when the Samaritans came to Him, they begged Him to stay with them. He abode there (outside Israel) two days” (v39,40).

These 2 days are symbolic and prophetic of the Church-Age. For although Jesus was first sent to the House of Israel, He also is ‘the Saviour of the whole world’ (v42). His salvation is for all people (even the outcast Samaritans living in immorality and false-religion). He surprised His Jewish disciples by deliberately going to the Samaritans and reaching out to them, promising them the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant that He would introduce, in which they would participate equally with the Jews (in which they would have direct access to God and they would not have to go through Israel or the Jewish Temple). Whereas Israel rejected Him, the Samaritans welcomed Him, so Jesus shocked His disciples further by abiding with them (in fellowship) for two days. This speaks of the Church-Age of 2 DAYS (2,000 years) during which Jesus Christ has moved from Israel and abided mostly with the Gentiles, with the result that many Gentiles have believed and received salvation in the New
Covenant (according to the promise of Jesus in this chapter): “And many more (Samaritans) believed because of His own word” (v41). However after the two days Jesus returned to Israel, and so the time is coming soon (after 2,000 years, see Hosea 5:15-6:3) when Jesus will move back to Israel, and she will welcome Him as her Messiah.

“And many more (Samaritans) believed because of His own word saying to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of your saying, for we have heard Him ourselves and know that He is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world’ (both Jew and Gentile)” (v41,42). They realised from the scriptures (unlike most of the Jews), that one sign of the true Messiah was that He would bring salvation and the knowledge of the true God to the whole world (as well as saving and exalting Israel). Jesus’ presence with them and His love and concern for them and their salvation, proved to them that He was the true Messiah, who was the Saviour of all men (even in the face of all their anti-Jewish prejudice).

The Messiahship of Jesus has now been further confirmed by what has happened over the last 2,000 years, through the world-wide growth of Christianity. As in the symbolic prophecy of John 4, during the last 2 days (2,000 years) many more Gentiles have believed because of Jesus’ Word and His Presence through His Spirit, and they have come to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God and Saviour of the world, the Source of Living Water, the One who delivers them from empty religion and brings them into a relationship with God, a worshipful fellowship with the Father. The spread of the knowledge of the God of Israel throughout the world was predicted in the Old-Testament, as coming to pass primarily through the Messiah, the seed of Abraham, in and through whom the blessing of Abraham would go to all peoples. He would be ‘the light to the nations.’ If we look at history, we see that Jesus and Jesus alone has fulfilled this Messianic requirement (as well as all the other credentials the Messiah must satisfy), for He alone among the Jewish leaders and prophets can claim to have fulfilled these prophecies. This is proof to Israel of the Messiahship of Jesus. What He began in John 4 in revealing Himself as ‘the Saviour of the world’, He has continued to do, as billions from every tribe, nation and tongue have believed in Him and through Him the God God of Israel. Jesus has surely proved Himself to be ‘the Christ, the Saviour of the world’ by fulfilling this prophetic picture of John 4.
9. Jesus heals a Nobleman’s Son (4:43-54).
THIS IS THE SECOND SIGN OF CHRIST in John’s Gospel.

v43 After the two days (at Samaria) He left for Galilee.

v44 Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honour in his own country (Galilee)

At this point (February AD 31), Jesus starts a new phase of ministry in Galilee that is recorded in all the Gospels and continues to the Feeding of the 5,000 at Passover AD 32 (Matthew 4:17-14:12, Mark 1:14-6:30, Luke 4:14-9:10). Only John however tells us about this first miracle of this new ministry-phase.

v45 When He arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed Him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there.

v46 Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum.

v47 When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

v48 "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."

v49 The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

v50 Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live." The man took Jesus at his word and departed.

v51 While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living.

v52 When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour."

v53 Then the father realised that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed.

v54 This was the SECOND miraculous SIGN that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee.
Introduction (v43-46a): “After the two days (at Samaria) He (Jesus) left for Galilee. Now Jesus Himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honour in his own country (Galilee). When He arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed Him. They had seen all that He had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there. Once more He visited Cana in Galilee, where He had turned the water into wine (He was probably visiting His mother who had been living there since the Wedding in John 2. He had been away for almost a year).”

John 2:23-25 tells us that Jesus had done miracles in Jerusalem, making Him popular with many but He knew their faith was superficial: “Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the Feast, many believed on His Name, beholding His signs which He did. But Jesus did not trust Himself to them, for He knew all men, and He needed not for anyone to bear witness concerning man; for He Himself knew what was in man.” Those from Galilee who had returned from the Feast now welcomed Him, but mostly because of the miracles. Jesus however, was looking for a deeper faith-commitment to Him as a Person, as the Messiah - not just as an entertainer or wonder-worker. So, He warned His disciples not to be fooled by the warm welcome, for not all would receive His claims: ‘a prophet has no honour in his own country’

The Nobleman: “And there was a certain royal official (from the Court of King Herod the Tetrach), whose son lay sick at Capernaum (he would have tried everything money could buy to heal his boy but without success). When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to Him and (persistently) begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death” (v46b,47).

He had real faith in Jesus as a prophet of God, but not yet as the Messiah - hence he felt Jesus would have to travel to physically touch his son.

Jesus speaks to the people: "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him,"you will never believe" (v48).

This striking response takes us by surprise. First, He was making a statement of fact - that Israel rightly required signs of Messiahship before receiving Him as the Messiah. In so doing, He was announcing to the people that He was about to give them another such sign that they might believe in Him. But it was also designed as a challenge to the unbelief of the people (including the Nobleman) who were slow to commit
themselves to Him in faith as their Saviour-King. They were just waiting for the next miracle, watching the best show in town, thinking: ‘Show us more, Jesus, then we will believe.’ They were not really believing in Him, but just living from one miracle to the next. Signs are given, not to entertain, but to bring people to faith in Jesus as Lord, leading to changed lives. Jesus took this opportunity to address their carnal mind (unbelief) which must SEE before BELIEVING. Jesus is calling this Nobleman to true faith in Him as the Son of God and to trust in His Word alone (without any other confirming evidence that he could see, feel or touch).

**SIGNS are illustrated messages**, showing us how the Kingdom works (how God wants to work in our lives). This Second Sign is included (selected) in God’s Word because it carries an important message for us. Here Christ reveals Himself as our HEALER, the Restorer of those about to die, whose power is not limited by distance. It also reveals the kind of true FAITH God desires to develop in us by which we receive life (trusting in Jesus as the Christ and in His Word alone).

**The Nobleman’s response (v49)**:  “The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." He was not put off, but showed faith by persisting with his request out of great love for his boy. He had a limited faith, for he believed Jesus could heal, but only if He was there in the flesh to do it. Moreover he assumed that Jesus could not resurrect the boy. He was not believing in Him as Messiah yet. He could believe and understand that if he could see Jesus come and touch the boy, then somehow he could be healed. But Jesus is not satisfied with this kind of faith.

In v50, Jesus now stretches his faith, bringing him to the point where he has to decide whether he will trust completely in His word: “Jesus replied, "GO YOUR WAY. Your son will live." “The man took Jesus at His word and departed” (v50).

The man had been at a low-level of faith that required a lot of sensory support, he had needed the assurance of Jesus’ Presence, but now he was required to just believe His Word (without seeing it work or understanding how it could work). This required total trust. He could not lean on his understanding, his senses, sight or feelings but purely on the Word of Jesus. This tested the genuineness of his faith in Christ. Was he like many others who would not believe until they saw or felt it, or
would He believe Jesus purely based on His word? He was being called to real faith (trusting in the Person of Christ, in the reliability of His character and word). He had a decision. Would he say: ‘No, Jesus, come with me’ or ‘How can I be sure, give me a sign or a tingling feeling’? Jesus would have said: ‘NO - you have my Word, that is enough’. The only evidence faith needs is the WORD: ‘He took Jesus at His word’ - this is simple faith which has corresponding actions: ‘and he departed (for home).’ He saw the look of love, strength and faithfulness in the face (Presence) of Jesus and took Him at His word. He BELIEVED (without understanding how it could work) then he SAW.

The Nobleman is our example of faith. When we hear God’s Word from the Presence of Jesus, faith comes (Romans 10:17) and we’re not to look for more signs. Is His Word enough for us or do we need to feel or see something extra before believing? If we’re just looking for more signs or feelings to convince us we have unbelief, and are in a babyhood level of faith. Jesus calls us to greater faith, as He did with this man.

The only evidence strong faith needs is the WORD:

1. Seek His Presence and receive His Word into your heart (then faith comes with the Word).
2. Take God at His Word, with simple pure faith.
3. Walk the walk of faith like the Nobleman. Add corresponding actions to your faith. Walk and talk as if the promise were true - don’t go desperately looking for feelings and signs. Go your way holding onto the word, thanking God for bringing it to pass: ‘I am healed, blessed and saved, because God says it and that settles it.’ If I don’t feel it, that does not change the Word. God’s Word is true and that is what counts. It is final reality, everything else is subject to change.

The only evidence strong faith needs is the WORD.

Examples: * God says: ‘I will bless (prosper) you.’
Don’t say: ‘When someone gives £1000, then I’ll believe’
* God says: ‘I am your Healer.’
Don’t say: ‘When I fall down, feel hot and tingling, then I’ll know’
* God says: “I give you wisdom’ (James 1:5).
Don’t say: ‘I don’t know what to do.’
But say by faith: “God is leading me step by step” (Psalm 23).
* Thank God for giving you “a spirit of power, love and discipline” (2Timothy 1:7) even when you don’t feel it.
* Know that God hears your prayers, if they are according to His will (1John 5:14, 1Peter 3:12).
* Believe His promise that His plans for you are good (Eph2:10, Jer 29:11)

Imagine a newly Married Couple. She is first assured by his loving presence and touch. Then they are separated by war. She must now trust his word alone. This is a deeper faith. If she says: ‘I don’t know you love me, because I can’t see or feel you, I need visible sign’, this would show a lack of faith in him. At our B&B we have to take credit card numbers to book a room because we can’t trust strangers, but for regular customers who’ve proved themselves this tangible assurance is not necessary. With an honourable man, his word is the best proof and assurance you can have.

**Can you trust Christ at His word, or does He have to prove Himself more to you? Do you need more signs before you believe? Do you still need to feel something before you walk in faith?**

The Nobleman received the Word and walked home in faith (v51-53): “While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said, "The fever ft him yesterday at the seventh hour." Then the father realised that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." He BELIEVED, then he SAW. The boy was healed the moment the word was given and received. When he received the Word (his faith based purely on the character of the One who gave it) healing flowed instantly. When you receive the word (of healing), you receive your healing: **“He sent His word and healed them”** (Psalm 107:20). Such faith that receives the Word brings peace even before you see the manifestation. We see this with the Nobleman. He did not rush the 20 miles home to Capernaum in an unbelieving panic, but travelled in peace, arriving the next day.

**“So he and all his household BELIEVED (in Jesus as the Messiah).”**

His faith was confirmed when he saw His word come to pass. Now, he knew Jesus had to be the Messiah to do such a sign (instant healing over distance by His word alone) showing His Lordship over space and time. His faith now had grown to believe fully in the Person of Christ - the God-Man. Whenever you trust God like this man and God provides, then your faith is strengthened as well as those close to you.
10. **Jesus - the Lord of Life and Death (JOHN 5:1-30).**

This was the 3rd Sign Jesus did in the Gospel of John.

v1-2 **After this** (after the miracle in Cana in John 4, following an extended time of ministry in Galilee, during which time Jesus moved His base to Capernaum - Matthew 4:13, Luke 4:31) there was a Feast of the Jews (this is probably during one of the Feasts in the 7th month, the time of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and Tabernacles, in 31 AD), and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

v3,4 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralysed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

v5,6 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity 38 years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

v7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

v8 Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."

v9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

v10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

v11 He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, "Take up your bed and walk.""

v12 Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, "Take up your bed and walk'?"

v13 But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.

v14 Afterward Jesus found him in the Temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more lest a worse thing come on you"
The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgement to the Son, that all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent Him.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

and has given Him authority to execute judgement also, because He is the Son of Man.

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgement is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.
1. The SIGN DEMONSTRATED (v1-9):

“After this there was a Feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate (the entrance for the sacrificial sheep of the Temple) a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches (this has been discovered just north of the Temple, a double pool with a division, hence the five colonnades). In these (porches) lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralysed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there with an infirmity 38 years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew (supernaturally) that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" (v1-6).

God chose this man out of a whole crowd for this sign which was designed to reveal Jesus Christ as the Giver of Life to the helpless and hopeless (that’s us!) As He taught later: “As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom He will” (v21). The Signs were messages to all mankind showing Who He is and What He does. They were designed to back up His claims to be the Son of God. This man was an extreme case: helpless and hopeless. He represents our spiritual state, dead in sin, totally unable to save ourselves. In raising him up Jesus demonstrated His power as Lord over life and death, showing how He wants to work in our life and how He wants us to cooperage by faith.

The way He worked the miracle is instructive for how He works in us:

(1) Like this man, we qualify by realising our weakness. We must come to end of our ability, realise our weakness, our helplessness to change, no longer depending on our own ability to gain salvation (life), for sin means we are worthy of death, and under the power of death. We must realise that Christ alone has the power to raise us up.

(2) We must look to God and His power for help and salvation. This man had lost hope, so Christ had to first awaken him out of his passivity, creating a desire and hope for change, for God’s power to work in us. Thus He asked: “Do you want to be made well?” A sick person can lack the desire to recover, preferring the ease of death to the challenges of life. Jesus was getting the man’s attention, awakening him to
look to God, that he became willing to receive His power. Likewise, Christ comes to us (as we lie paralysed in sin) and asks by His Spirit: **“Do you want Me to give you new life?”** He awakens our hope and desire for His life to change us. This is the first step of salvation, for if we don’t really desire God to work in us, we will stay the same. He needs our co-operation, our willingness for Him to work in us. He supplies all the power for life and resurrection but we must want it.

**“The sick man answered Him** (showing that he wanted healing): "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me" (v7).

(3) When God tells you to take some action (a step of faith), don’t be passive but work with God: **“Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."** _And immediately_ (upon applying his will to move) _the man was made well_ (God’s power flowed), _took up his bed and walked_” (v8,9) Jesus told him to do the impossible, to do what he could not do before. He called upon his faith. Don’t say: “I can’t”, for when He speaks, faith always comes with His words (Rom 10:17) and as you start to act His power will move. As the man applied his will to obey, God’s power came upon him, enabling him to walk. God supplied all the power, but he had to cooperage with God. Don’t say: _‘That small thing God tells me to do, won’t make much difference, what’s the point.’_ It is your obedience releases God’s power which makes all the difference.

2. **The SABBATH DISPUTE** (v9b-16). **“And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured,** "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed." They should have rejoiced in the healing of this well-known cripple, but they were more concerned about their legalistic interpretation of the Sabbath. God commanded Israel not to work on the Sabbath, but they reduced this to thousands of petty rules. Conflict over the Sabbath was common in Jesus’ ministry, because although He kept the law of Moses, He often broke their man-made regulations. The Sabbath law was simply that men should not work, but the Jews had made it a legalistic burden with detailed rules. So plucking grain or even pulling out a hair was reaping and thus forbidden. Likewise wearing false-teeth or an extra garment or a sowing needle or carrying your bed (like this healed
man) was burden-bearing! Sometimes, He defended His actions on the Sabbath, by showing he was not breaking God’s law, but only their petty rules and regulations. He pointed out their approach to the Sabbath was all wrong and that they had completely missed the point. He said: ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.’ It was given to man as a blessing, so that He would not have to work every day, but have one day of rest and worship to concentrate on the grace of God and enter into His rest. But they had turned it into a complicated set of legalistic observances, that only pandered to pride if they kept them.

Christians are not under the law of Moses, but the Sabbath principle still applies. We are not designed for continual work, seven days a week. We need one day of rest and worship or we come under stress and get worn out. As much as possible, Christians should avoid work on Sundays to honour and worship the Lord.

The penalty for breaking the Sabbath could be death. So in self-defence, in fear of being stoned by the Jews: “He answered them: "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.' " Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place” (v11-13).

“Afterward Jesus found him in the Temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (v14). Now we discover that his sickness was due to sin. It is not always directly due to a personal sin, but ultimately all sickness and death is the offspring of (original) sin. This word from Jesus shows his outward problem was symptomatic of his inward problem (sin), and that Jesus did not just heal him but also forgave him. So this Sign shows His power over sin and death, and that He wants to save our souls as well as heal our bodies. Jesus has the power to raise us both from spiritual and physical death to eternal life. However we have a choice. If we continue in sin, something worse will happen than mere sickness. Jesus warned him not just of a relapse into sickness, but of the danger of eternal death (hellfire judgement). He confirms this later when He teaches on the meaning of this Sign. In this teaching Jesus talks about the ‘greater works’ (of spiritual and physical resurrection) that He will do (that this Sign anticipates and foreshadows), as well as the ‘worse thing’ (judgement)
that He will bring upon those who sin (reject His grace).

“The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews (continually) persecuted Jesus and sought to kill Him, because He had (habitually) done these things on the Sabbath” (v15,16).

3. The SON’S DOMINION - the Message of this Sign (v17-30).
In raising up this man (helpless under the power of sin and death) into newness of life, Jesus proved Himself to be ‘the Lord of life and death.’ We will see in His teaching on this Sign that He claims this authority and power in the strongest possible way. Accused of working on the Sabbath, He sometimes defended His actions by showing He was not breaking the Law of Moses but only their foolish traditions (thus healing on the Sabbath is permissible). But this time He defended His actions by claiming Deity, for since God worked on the Sabbath, so must He, for He is Lord:

“But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now and I have been working." Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, for He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His (own) Father, making Himself equal with God” (v17,18).

This is like His claim: ‘the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath’.
This claim made them even more angry, for they knew He was claiming to be the unique Son of God (with same nature as and equal to the Father). As God was working and giving life, so He must work, for everything the Triune God does, they necessarily do together. As the Son is one with the Father, He works in perfect harmony with Him - that is why He did this healing on the Sabbath.

The Trinity John’s Gospel gives us much important revelation on the Trinity (God is one Being, in three Persons) showing us the relationships in the Trinity most clearly (especially in John 5).

God chose to reveal His Triune nature through the Drama of Redemption:

1. In the Old-Testament we see GOD, the FATHER clearly.
The emphasis is on the Oneness of God, though we also see the SON as the Angel (Messenger) and Word (Message) of God, prophesied to become a Man (the God-Man Messiah).
2. In the Gospels we clearly see GOD the SON (Jesus Christ), one with the Father yet a distinct Person. The Coming of the SPIRIT was prophesied in John14-16. He would come from the Father through the Son. He is described another Comforter (Helper) like unto the Son, thus He is a Divine Person like the Son, yet a distinct Person from the Son.

3. In Acts and Epistles, we clearly see GOD, the HOLY-SPIRIT- Who is true God yet a distinct Person from both the Father and the Son.

They (Father, Son and Holy-Spirit) modelled (revealed) to us their eternal Being and relationships in time (through the drama of redemption), so that we may know God.

"Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of (from) Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." They dance face to face together (cf: 1:1). The Son perfectly acts out and reveals the will of the Father. The Father initiates and works through the Son. "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel" (v19,20). This miracle was the Son working out the will of the Father, but it was just a sign of much greater things to come that the Son will do by and from the Father.

Now He describes these greater works:
"For as the Father raises the (spiritually and physically) dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will (as He sovereignly did to the sick man). For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgement to the Son, that all should honour (worship) the Son (as God) just as they honour the Father (as true God). He who does not honour (worship) the Son (as God) does not honour the Father who sent Him" (v21-23).

He speaks of three Divine Works (that only God can do) the Son will do:
1. The New-Birth: raising us up from spiritual death, giving us eternal life
2. Physical Resurrection
3. Eternal Judgement (which is based on your response to the Son, whether you honour Him as God or not).

These are all acts unique to Deity.
1. All SPIRITUAL LIFE comes from the Father through the Son: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me (the Father) has eternal life, and shall not come into judgement (of condemnation) but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the (spiritually) dead will hear the voice of the Son of God (through the Gospel) and those who hear will live (receive spiritual resurrection in the New-Birth). For as the Father (the Source) has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son (the perfect image of the Father) to have life in Himself (and to be the Source of eternal life to us)" (v24-26).

2. The PHYSICAL RESURRECTION of all men is by the SON: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming (still future) in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - (1) those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and (2) those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (v28,29). There are two resurrections. The first resurrection is of the righteous unto eternal life. the second resurrection is of the unrighteous unto eternal death (see Revelation 20). Jesus is the Lord of both. These resurrections through the Son are followed by eternal judgement, either for reward or punishment, which is also administered by the Son.

3. All JUDGEMENT is by the SON: “and has given Him authority to execute judgement also, because He is the Son of Man (He is worthy to judge men having lived perfectly as a man, and having died for our salvation)” (v27). Jesus also said: “I can of Myself do nothing (He always acts in dependance on the Father). As I hear, I judge and My judgement is just, for I seek not My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me” (v30).

Thus, Jesus is the Son of God, the Source of eternal spiritual life, physical resurrection and judgement. He is the Lord over life and death. If we receive and honour Him as Lord we have life, but if we dishonour (reject) Him we stand condemned. Spiritually, we are like this helpless man in John 5 (he mirrors every man). The Son wants to forgive, heal and restore us. He has the desire and power, if we are willing (as proved by the Sign). He wants to do the greater work of resurrection in and for us, but if we sin (reject Him) a worse thing will come on us (eternal judgement). Such great claims by Jesus, require authentication which He gives in v31-47.
11. The Son’s AUTHENTICATION (John 5:31-47).

He relies on the witness of His Father (v31,32):
"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. (In John 8:14, Jesus claims that His testimony to Himself is valid as it is based on His perfect self-knowledge. The point He makes here is that since the Pharisees would not accept it as valid (see John 8:13), He would not rely on it alone). There is another (the Father) who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.

John’s witness (v33-35): "You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man (His assurance was not based on John), but I say these things (His reference to John the Baptist) that you may be saved (the Jews were impressed by John as a man of God, so the fact that He pointed to Jesus as the Messiah was a powerful witness). He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.”

The Father’s witness: the signs He worked through the Son (v36).
"But I have a greater witness than John's; for the WORKS which the Father has given Me to finish - the very works that I do - bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.”

The Father’s personal witness: at His Baptism and Anointing (v37).
"And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.” The Father spoke out of Heaven and sent the Spirit upon Jesus, thus affirming the Son

The Father’s witness: through the prophetic Scriptures (v38-40):
"But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”

Christ’s words describing those who reject Him (v41-47).
"I do not receive honour (praise) from men (Jesus loved God above all and looked only to please Him and to receive honour from Him). But I know you (unbelievers in Israel), that you do not have the love of God in you (they had not received God’s love and grace because they trusted in their own works, and so neither did they love God)” (v41,42).
I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive” (v43). This will ultimately be fulfilled in the antichrist, whom Israel will receive at the start of the Tribulation to their cost. Jesus came to do God’s will and glorify God, but the antichrist will do his own will and glorify himself).

“How can you believe, who receive honour from one another, and do not seek the honour that [comes] from the only God?” (v44). Those who primarily look for men’s approval focus on putting on an outward show to impress men, but do not attend to getting their heart right in humble dependance on God (faith) which results in His approval, for “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6). The person you want approval from is the one you will look towards, listen to and follow. So if you seek man’s approval, you will not be looking to God in faith for His approval (for you can’t serve two Masters) Paul also points out that there are two contrasting motivations in the lives of believers and unbelievers: “For he is not a (true) Jew who is one (merely) outwardly... but he is a (true) Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose PRAISE is not from men but from God” (Romans 2:28,29). A Jew belongs to Judah which means ‘Praise’. So the characteristic of a true (believing) Jew is one who seeks approval from God rather than men.

Jesus says that the reason they rejected Him is that they were not true believers who constantly look to God, trusting and depending on Him, seeking to hear Him and please Him. Instead they were focused upon their own works, efforts and righteousness seeking the approval of men. As a result they did not recognise God’s grace coming to them in Jesus Christ. These Jews thought they were secure because they looked to Moses and his law to establish their righteousness (Rom10:3). But no man can find salvation through the works of law, because we are all sinners. The law was given to prepare men for Christ, by revealing sin in the light of God’s perfection, and to point to the way of salvation that comes through Christ. Therefore the Moses they rely on will accuse, rather than applaud them!:

“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you - Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (v45-47). \page62

The Sign-Miracle (this was the 4th Sign Jesus did in the Gospel of John).

v1-3 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

v4 Now the Passover, a Feast of the Jews, was near (April/May AD 32, confirmed in v10 and Mark 6:39 by the presence of the lush Spring grass).

v5,6 Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

v7 Philip answered Him, "200 denarii (7 months wages) worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."

v8,9 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

v10 Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down."

Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

v11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

v12 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost."

v13 Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

v14,15: “Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world" Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.”
John’s Gospel is based on Signs (which are miracles designed to send a message). They reveal who Jesus is (the Son of God) and what He does for those who believe, as well as how God’s Kingdom works. This is the only Miracle recorded in all four Gospels, so it has a special importance.

**THE SIGN ITSELF (v1-13):** “After these things (about 6 months have passed since John 5, for we are now coming up to the next major Feast. During this time, Jesus has been ministering intensively in Galilee), Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee (also called Tiberias). Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, a Feast of the Jews, was near (this is Springtime, near the Passover of AD 32, and so Moses, the Manna and the Passover Lamb were on the peoples’ minds and they feature strongly in this chapter).”

“The then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do” (v1-6). He wanted to involve the disciples in the miracle. First, He wanted them to appreciate the magnitude of the need and the problem.

Philip did the calculation: “Philip answered, "200 denarii (a denarii was a typical days wage) worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little" (v7). His assessment was that it was impossible to feed them all by their own ability, but he failed to look in faith to God’s ability. Faith looks the difficulty in the face, but says ‘God is greater’. When God tells us to do something, it is a test of our faith, because it will be beyond our natural ability. If we say: ‘It’s impossible, so I won’t do anything’, we fail the test, like Philip. Andrew went further in faith. He realised Jesus was fixing to do something and was involving them in it, so he did what he could do to help, looking for food: “One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him: "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves (like pancakes) and two small fish (the size of sardines), but what are they among so many? (it was just a boy’s snack)” (v8,9).

The second thing Jesus wanted them to see was that what we can do
or give is small compared to the size of the need. What Andrew did, however, was the start of the miracle. When we do what we can, and put ourselves ‘on the line’ trusting God, He will work and do what we can’t do. What he brought to Jesus was just a SEED - but a SEED is powerful because it has the ability to multiply when planted in the right soil. A small SEED can meet a big NEED when planted in the Lord’s hands. What we have may seem so small (like the pancakes) but if we give it to Jesus and put it into His hands, He will do a miracle with it. He needs our action, He wants us to sow the seed and trust Him for the harvest.

“Then Jesus said,"Make the people sit down"
(In other words: ‘Now someone has sown what they have, and now I can work. We are ready for a miracle. Rest and get ready to receive!’)
Now there was much grass in the place.
So the men sat down, in number about 5000” (v10). With women and children there could have been 15,000. The men were the first to sit down - typical! The lad had a choice. If he held onto the little he had, he would have missed a miracle. But he planted the seed that initiated God’s power. We can stay in our small world or by faith enter a big life of God’s provision. If we put ourselves - our gifts, energy, money, time, into the Master’s hands, then He will multiply them and bless many.

“And (1) Jesus TOOK the loaves (God takes and uses what we give Him) and when (2) He had given THANKS (the other Gospels tell us He also LOOKED to Heaven, to God, the Source of multiplication and BLESSED the food). Always say Grace over your food. Instead of grumbling at the lack of food, Jesus thanked God for what He had provided - then God multiplied it. This is a lesson for us. When He offered it to God, putting it into God’s hands, God took it and His power hovered on it (the seed was blessed - empowered to multiply). (3) Then (having BROKEN the bread) (4) He DISTRIBUTED (GAVE) them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down (they shared in the miracle) and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted” (v11-12).

The miracle happened in His hands. God’s power went to work multiplying the bread. What you hold onto is not blessed, but what you
put (give) into His hands will be multiplied. Put yourself (as seed) into His hands, for that’s where blessings and miracles happen.

“So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." Therefore they gathered them up and filled 12 baskets (one for each disciple - God will reward you and supply your needs, if you will be God’s channel to others) with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten” (v13).

God always provides an ABUNDANT SUPPLY, if we will trust Him by sowing what we have to Him. By this miracle, He was also showing them how the Kingdom of God works (how we can be used of God). It is according to the SEED principle. Our seed (which what we have to give God, whether it is money, time, gifts, love or help) is small compared to the need, but if we will offer (sow) it to God with thanksgiving, He will multiply it and bring forth an abundant harvest from it. Sowing seed requires sacrifice but it is well rewarded by the harvest reaped.

The rest of the chapter concerns the message and meaning of this Sign. It established His claim to be the Son of God, the ‘I AM’, which He made explicit when He said: “I AM the Bread of Life.”

Jesus first had to correct their wrong interpretation of the significance of the Sign: “Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world" Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone” (v14,15).

At the time of Moses, God gave Israel Manna from Heaven. When Jesus supernaturally provided bread, they correctly realised that He was the promised ‘prophet like unto Moses’ of Deuteronomy 18:15-19. But they were thinking carnally, that as Moses delivered them from the dominion of Egypt, Jesus would be their military Deliverer from Rome.

The next verses (John 6:16-21) describe Jesus walking on the water, after which He preaches at Capernaum giving the meaning of the miracle (v22-59). For clarity, we will first study this teaching and then look at the Water-Walking Sign (see page 77)

v22,23 On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone -however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks -

v24,25 when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"

v26,27 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

v28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

v29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

v30,31 Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

v32,33 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true Bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

v34 Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

v35,36 And Jesus said to them, "I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.

v37,38 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

v39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.
And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the Bread which came down from heaven." And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, "I have come down from heaven'?"

Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

The Jews therefore quarrelled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"

Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.

This is the Bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this Bread will live forever." These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.
The importance of this miracle is seen that it is the only one included in all four Gospels. Normally John only includes material, not covered by the other writers, but he was unable to leave out the Feeding of the 5,000. As such it is a key chronological marker in the ministry of Christ that links the four Gospels together. He now begins a new phase of ministry (from Spring to the Autumn of AD32 in which He was still based at Galilee, but also travelling to other districts, yet avoiding Judea (John 7:1), giving more intensive training to His disciples. This ministry is described in Matthew 14-18, Mark 6-9, and Luke 9:10-50).

The Significance of the Sign (v22-59). We saw that the people had misunderstood the miracle (v14,15). They thought it meant Jesus had come as a Deliverer setting them free from the Romans as Moses liberated Israel from the power of Egypt. They did not realise He had come to bring a far greater liberation: from sin and eternal death. Because He was a promising Deliverer from Roman rule they sought Him out the next day (also as we shall see, they wanted some more free meals): “On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples but His disciples had gone away alone - however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks - when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?" (v22-25). They were puzzled how Jesus crossed over without a boat (see v16-21)!

When they found Jesus the next day, He gave them a talk explaining what the Sign meant and what it revealed about Himself as the Bread of Life. “These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum” (v59). He told them they were really just interested in just getting more food rather than the spiritual significance of the miracle: “Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled” (v26). The sign was to point them to the real (eternal and spiritual) food He wanted to supply to them: "Do not labour (spending all your time and effort) for the food that perishes, but (work) for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him" (v27).
“Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" (v28,29). The basic principle in God’s Kingdom is faith. Trust and dependence upon Christ is the essential thing that enables us to do God’s will. Good works flow out of this. Works in the energy and motivation of our own flesh are just dead works.

Jesus did the sign to prove He offers them spiritual food (the Eternal Bread of Life), to be received by faith (by eating it). Thus by eating this Bread we receive His life, by which (life) we may live a life pleasing to God. He was trying to get them focused on spiritual food, to be hungry and thirsty for Him but they kept pushing for more food: “Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the Manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat" (v30,31). They were saying: “If you are Messiah, prove you are greater than Moses. He fed Israel with manna for 40 years, so top that!” When Jesus made it clear that His true mission was spiritual not political (v32-59), many no longer wanted to follow Him and left Him, and this is also when Judas started to turn against Him in his heart (v60-71).

The True Interpretation of the Sign (v32-59). He tells them that this Sign was not given to establish Him as a military Deliverer (for they were comparing Him to Moses who gave Israel manna), for it was God (not Moses) who gave them bread from heaven. Instead He wanted them to think of Him in symbolism of this Sign to be represented by the Bread. God sent manna from Heaven in the time of Moses, but now God was indeed giving them something far greater in Himself (the Messiah), even ‘the true Bread from Heaven’: “Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true Bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is He (Jesus Christ, the Son of God) who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (v32,33). (He also said: "I came down from Heaven” (v38). "I am the BREAD which came down from heaven" (v41). This is talking about the Incarnation. Jesus was born in Bethlehem which means ‘House of Bread’ - for it was where ‘the Bread of Life’ from heaven came to earth).

“Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always" (v34).
However for Bread to give us life, it has to be broken in the jaws and eaten. Likewise Jesus offers Himself to us as the Bread of life by being crushed in the jaws of death, so that we can eat Him (this is a picture of appropriating His life by FAITH, of receiving Jesus). We must EAT of Him (Christ) for only then does His (eternal) life get imparted to us: "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe" (v35,36). Coming to Christ (as the Bread of eternal Life) and eating Him is synonymous with saving faith.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has (possesses) everlasting life. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE” (v47,48).

This is an ‘I AM’ claim of Deity by Jesus Christ, for He is saying that He alone is the Source and Substance of eternal life, yet it is necessary for us to believe in Him to receive His Life, just as it is necessary to eat bread to receive the strength and energy within the bread)

God gives His Bread (Christ) freely to all men, but not all will believe and receive (eat) Him. The believers will come to Christ to ‘eat’ because of their choice to receive Him (and His forgiveness and eternal life), but that is only possible if the Father first draws them - but God reaches out to all men (v44). Believers are foreknown (elect) by the Father in eternity, chosen from before the foundation of the world. In the eternal counsel and covenant of God, the Son promised the Father to be incarnated and give His life on the Cross for our salvation, and the Father promised the Son the gift of a glorious Bride composed of all believers: “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me” (v37a).

The Bride is the gift of the Father to the Son, of all those who freely choose to be in eternal covenant-union Christ. The problem of reconciling the dual but apparently contradictory truths of Divine Sovereignty and human freewill in the selection of the Bride is solved by realising the Bride is chosen through Divine Omniscience of all possible universes (rather than God choosing some to be saved and not others). The universe containing the chosen Bride was given existence by the word of Creation.

“and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (v37b).

To come to Christ is always a reference to saving faith when we trust ourselves to Him and receive His life. Here He assures us of our security in the love of Christ (see also Romans 8:37-39). If it is possible to
lose our salvation it is not because He will reject us and cast us out, but because we have rejected Him. If we continue to trust in Christ alone for our eternal life and destiny, we can be fully assured of our salvation.

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me” (Jesus is the perfect expression of God’s will. He lived in humble obedience to the Father’s will). This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him (1) may have everlasting life (as a present possession by the New-Birth); and (2) I will raise him up at the last day (physical resurrection)” (v38-40). The will and eternal decree of God is that all who believe in Christ, that is all who see the Son through the eyes of faith, seeing who He is (the Lord, the God-man, the son of God and the son of man) and what He did (in His death and resurrection) will come to Him and receive eternal life (their spirit is reborn, receiving the indestructible life and nature of the resurrected Christ) and that they are held secure in Christ, so that no power can take us out of His hand (John 10:28-30), until we are finally resurrected physically at the last day to stand glorious before Him, thus completing the process of the Bride’s redemption and glorification.

However, not all will believe, for they just see Him as a man but deny His pre-existence and heavenly origin: “The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the Bread which came down from heaven." And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, "I have come down from heaven"?" (v41,42).

“Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day”” (v43,44). Here Jesus affirms that the Father sent Him from Heaven as the Bread of Life. Those who come to Him and receive Him will be reborn and have a resurrection into an eternal state of life. However they can only come to Him in faith if the Father draws them to the Son through the work of the Holy-Spirit. We can’t see Christ or come to Him without His help because sin blinds and paralyses us spiritually. This truth calls us to humility before God and to praying for others that they may see Jesus.
“It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." This shows that the Father is drawing everyone to Christ. Not everyone wants to hear what God is saying so they resist. Others however, hear and respond as God moves in their lives and He is able to remove their spiritual blindness (unbelief), so that they can come to Christ: “Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me” The Father draws us invisibly, spiritually, through His Holy-Spirit: “Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God (the Son who came from the Father); He has seen the Father” (v45,46).

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who BELIEVES in Me has everlasting LIFE. I am the BREAD of LIFE” (v47,48).

“Eternal Life is in Me. Whoever EATS Me receives Eternal Life.”

“Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead” (v49).

“This (pointing to Himself) is the Bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die” (v50). “I AM THE LIVING BREAD which came down from heaven (the Incarnation). If anyone eats of this Bread, he will live forever (this is greater than the manna of Moses, for it gives us eternal life, not just temporal help)” (v51a). He restates these truths in His conclusion in v58: “This (pointing to Himself) is the (true) Bread which came down from heaven (see v51a), not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead (see v49). He who eats this Bread will live forever (see v51a)."

Thus in v47-51 and in v58, Jesus gives the central proposition of His message, in response to the people comparing His miracle to Moses. Between these central declarations, v51b-57 provide extra explanation of what the Bread of Life is and what it means to eat of Him. He offers Himself as spiritual food, but now the image changes from Bread to the Flesh of the Passover Lamb (it was Passover time). It was exactly one year before His death on the Cross as our Passover Lamb at Passover AD33 (1Cor 5:7). His Breaking of Bread to feed the 5,000 was a picture of His body (flesh) being broken for us, to feed the world with eternal life. He must die as the Passover Lamb, and as Israel ate the Lamb and were saved, so we are to partake by faith (eat and drink) of His sacrifice to have eternal life. It is available for all: “and the Bread that I shall give is My Flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (v51b).
“The Jews therefore quarrelled among themselves, saying: "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" (v52). In their carnal thinking they took Him literally and were offended. They did not understand He was using the symbolic language of the Passover sacrifice. Later He spells it out: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit and life" (v63).

“Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (v53).

Eternal life and salvation can only be found in Jesus Christ. We must come to Him, believing in His sacrificial death for us (for our forgiveness and eternal life), otherwise we are still under the power of death. We must partake of (appropriate, eat and drink) His life freely offered to us. That is, we must personally receive the crucified and risen Christ into ourselves by faith, trusting in Him alone as our only Source of life and salvation.

Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood (believes in Christ): (1) has eternal life (as a present possession through spiritual resurrection in the New-Birth) and (2) I will raise him up (physically) at the last day (see v40)” (v54). The sacrificial death of Christ has broken the power of all death, and by His resurrection His life is released to us, so that if we receive Him we receive His abundant, spiritual, resurrection life in our spirits and bodies for all eternity and be delivered from death forever!

“For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed (it sustains our spirits and bodies for all eternity) He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him (through faith in Christ and His sacrifice, we are eternally united to Him in covenant-relationship and fellowship). As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me” (v55-57).

Here, Jesus makes an amazing statement. We are raised above the angels into the dynamic fellowship of the Trinity. The Father is the Source of Life and Authority for the Son (who is ‘sent from the Father’). The Son trust and submits to the Father, receiving His Life and Love from Him through the Holy-Spirit, returning Him in an eternal circle of fellowship (‘the communion of the Spirit’). Through His sacrifice we may enter into this wonderful giving fellowship (flow) of life. When we believe in Christ,
we enter a relationship with the Son, just like the Son has with the Father! We trust and submit to Him, constantly receiving His Life and Love through the Holy-Spirit He freely gives us (‘we live because of Him’), so that by faith we are continually feeding on (receiving) His Life, made available on the basis of His death in the Holy-Spirit. As we return His gift of love (the Holy-Spirit) through our obedient works and worship, the dynamic circle of loving fellowship (flow of life) is activated. Thus the union and sharing of love between Father and Son, is also established between the Son and us (see also John 17:3,21-23,26).

The Sign verified His claim: “I AM the Bread of Life.”

This claim meant that Jesus is God and has come to give Himself to us as life-giving food, so when we eat of Him, we receive His eternal life. The Sign also shows how He would offer Himself up to die for us and be multiplied as the Bread. He would make Himself available to all.

It was a prophetic Picture of Salvation for, Jesus (as the High Priest) would offer Himself (as the Bread of Life) up to God even unto death. He was broken for us on the Cross to feed us with His life. Then by God’s supernatural blessing, the Bread of Life (Jesus) was multiplied and distributed to all mankind, so that whoever would eat Him (receive Him by faith) would partake of His eternal life.

Notice the sequence in v11,12:
(1) Jesus TOOK the Bread (Jesus took Himself to the Cross)
(2) LOOKING to Heaven, He gave THANKS, BLESSING the Bread (Jesus offered His humanity up to God in obedient faith, trusting and thanking God to bless and multiply His offering to feed the world).
(3) He BROKE the bread (He broke His body for us on the Cross).
(4) He DISTRIBUTED (GAVE) it to the people (By His resurrection, He gives Himself to the world, offering them with eternal life for God blesses and multiplies Him to feed the world).

To be effective each person had to receive the Bread offered to them:
(5) They had to TAKE the Bread and EAT it.

This is a picture of saving faith. It is not just intellectual assent. We have to personally receive (take and eat) Christ by faith, partaking of His life by trusting Him alone for forgiveness and eternal life.

This is why this miracle was so important. It signified beforehand
because multiply start every sun to (the manna another They word make and on God 12:24, His your the spirit life; receiving their of to God also the Ministry (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) in Jesus exactly remembrance hand "Jesus TOOK Bread” “and BLESSED it” “and BROKE it” “and GAVE it to His disciples” “and said: “TAKE, EAT - this is My body.”

Our Ministry today: The disciples shared in this miracle, for Jesus gave the blessed bread to them to give (distribute) to the people and the food also multiplied in their hands (otherwise there would not have been time to hand out all the food). Jesus was preparing them for their ministry of the Word, for they would feed the people the Bread of Life through their teaching of the Word. Christ’s Life is in the Word, and by receiving His Word they will receive Him for: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The WORDS that I speak to you are spirit and life” (v63, also v68). Through the miracle Jesus showed them the principles of ministering Life through the Word: Offer yourself and your message of Jesus up to God, trusting Him to bless and multiply it by His Spirit, as you break the bread and give it to feed the people (so in Acts 12:24, ‘the word of God grew and multiplied’ through the believers).

God gave Israel the daily manna to teach them daily dependance in feeding on the Word of God for spiritual sustenance and life: “He humbled you, and allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord” (Deut 8:3, Matt 4:4). They had to collect their ‘daily bread’ for the manna would not keep for another day. We need a daily devotional time with the Lord. Yesterday’s manna is no good for today. We need to feed daily on God’s Manna (the Word) for that is how the Bread of Life (the life of Christ) is given to us (v63,68). They collected it first thing in the morning, for when the sun rose, the manna melted. God’s mercies through His Word come “new every morning” (Lamentations 3:23). If we give ourselves to God at the start of the day, before the problems and pressures of the day arise, He will multiply the rest of the day to us. Any time we spend with Him is not lost, because His blessing on the rest of the day means more is achieved.

v60 “Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

v61 “When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?” (Just because they could not understand something was no reason to get offended, but it should have caused them to seek Him more for understanding).

v62 “What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend to where He was before?” Having predicted His death for us, Jesus now predicted His resurrection and ascension and that it would be witnessed by His disciples. He is telling them that to follow God, we have to be flexible to give up our small, limited ideas and be ready to listen and go with God’s ideas. Although His death was the necessary basis, the communication of His life to us requires His resurrection, ascension and the giving of the Spirit:

v63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.” (This verse is very helpful to keep us depending on God).

“The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”

The Spirit communicates the eternal life of Christ, through His words.

v64 “But there are some of you who do not believe." (Not all who seem to follow Christ, are true believers. They show themselves eventually by leaving Him as some do here in v66. These do not receive His eternal life).

“For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him” (see v70,71). Jesus knows those who are His (2Tim2:19). You can’t hide anything from His Omniscience.

v65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me (believe) unless it has been granted to him by My Father (v44)."

v66,67 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the 12: "Do you also want to go away?"

v68,69 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (Peter has understood that the life of Christ is communicated through His Words, see v63). Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"

v70,71 “Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.”
15. Jesus Walks on the Water (John 6:15-21)

This was the 5th Sign Jesus did in the Gospel of John.

v15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone (to pray, see Matt14:23, Mark 6:46). There are times when we need to be alone with God to find His will, to give us strength to face the pressures.

v16 Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, v17 got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. (In Matthew 14:22, Mark 6:45 we are told that Jesus had told the disciples to cross the sea). And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them (this is a trial of faith, when we are doing His will and problems hit and it seems dark and we can’t feel His Presence). Jesus wasn't with His disciples, but He was praying for them, and now He intercedes for us at the right hand of God.

v18 Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing (against them and they were struggling and in some danger - see Mark 6:48, Matt 14:24). When we start doing something for God, spiritual winds from satan may oppose us. Suddenly, a storm came down upon the disciples in the boat and the waves pushed them back. The sea represents natural, visible problems and circumstances, stirred up by the invisible winds (spiritual forces). But, if God calls us to do something, He will help us accomplish it. If we call upon Him, we will overcome by His power and make it to the other side. I am sure they were praying for help and God heard them.

v19 So when they had rowed about three or four miles (they were in the middle of the lake - see Mark 6:47, but Jesus had seen them in the moonlight, getting nowhere by their own strength - Mark 6:48).

At 3.00am, He came to help them, walking on the water (Matthew 14:25). Jesus sees us and what we are going through. He knows what we are facing and He comes to us in the trials of life when we pray: “they saw Jesus walking on the sea (here comes the answer to their prayer!) and drawing near the boat (Mark 6:48 says “He was about to pass them by!” You see, when we pray God immediately sends the answer, but we must receive the answer ‘into our boat’ or it will pass us by. We must have the confidence in God, to believe we receive the answer in our spirit
when we pray (Mark 11:24; 1John 5:14,15; James 1:5-8), then we will have the answer manifested in due course. Often God sends the answer, but people do not see it or are afraid of it. Jesus would have passed them by, for He respects our freewill. He will only come into our boat (our life) if invited. If we prefer to struggle on our own, He will let us do that.

“and they were afraid” (fear and unbelief can hinder us from receiving our answer by faith). The disciples were full of fear, believing He was a ghost, and they cried out in fear (Mark 6:49,50; Matthew 14:26).

v20 But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." He also told them to “take courage” (Matt14:27, Mark 6:50), for it takes confidence to believe God sends a supernatural answer to prayer and to believe you receive it. He says to us: "Take courage. It is I; do not be afraid." We do not fear when we know He is with us and will not leave or forsake us.

v21 Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going. This is a miracle (the 6th Sign), giving us a wonderful picture of salvation. We were struggling in our own strength, on the sea of life, trying to reach the other side (eternal life in God’s Kingdom) but failing. All seemed dark and hopeless, but as we start looking for God’s help, we see Jesus coming to us, drawing near. He has seen us and our troubles and wants to save us. Jesus, walking over the water is a picture of the risen Christ, who has overcome the gravity (force) of sin, satan and death. Sin tries to pull us down, but Jesus has overcome it. We need to receive Christ and His overcoming, resurrection power into our boat (our heart and life). He often draws near to save people, but they do not see Him or are afraid to receive Him. There was a storm of fear in the disciple’s hearts, but Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and as soon as He spoke to them, "It is do be not afraid." As we listen to His words of love and assurance our fear goes and we ‘willingly received Him’ into our heart. When we invite Him in, He always comes in (Rev3:20). When we receive Him, peace comes (the wind then died down - Matt 14:32, Mark 6:51), for we cease from our own works (our struggles to reach the other side), for when we have Christ we have eternal life: "immediately the boat reached the other side.” A miracle of instantaneous transportation! When we receive Him, we are immediately translated into the Kingdom of God and given eternal life (Col 1:12-14)! Then we worship Him as the Son of God (Matt 14:33)
We overcome through Christ in us. When we struggle to fulfil God's call and do His will, the power of the world is real, but Jesus has greater power (John 16:33). We can now overcome because the Overcomer lives in us (1John 2:14; 4:4; 5:4,5). If we have received Jesus, we are overcomers, for by faith we are united to His overcoming life and have victory over all the power of the enemy.

Jesus walking on the water is a picture of His overcoming life. As He walked, it was God's power was holding Him up, not the water. It is impossible to walk on water and He did not really walk on the water, but on the Word and the Spirit of God. Jesus was not ‘under’ circumstances, He was an Overcomer - He walked by faith OVER the water. As He took each step by faith, He was upheld by a power greater than gravity.

Matthew 14:28-31 tells us how Peter also walked on the water. He shows us that we can share the overcoming life of Christ, and walk over the water like Jesus. Of course, Peter did not walk on the water, but on the Word of Christ. The power of the Word was holding him up (the world was made and is upheld by the Word of God). He is a picture of believers walking by faith on the Word. Peter realised that if it was Jesus walking on the water, He could transfer this power to His disciples, so that they could walk in the same way (v28). Peter knew that he too could walk by faith, if he had the Word from Jesus, for then he could walk on the Word. Peter was willing to put his faith into action, to leave the boat (the place of safety) and step out, and his faith pleased God. Presumption is to step out without a word from God but Peter knew he needed the Word to walk by faith.

Jesus gave him the word: “Come” (v29). One Word from God is all we need. The Word gave him faith (Rom10:17). Peter stepped out on one word from Jesus and started to walk on the water toward Jesus (v29). His eyes were on Jesus and every step was a step of faith. As he made each step, the power of the Spirit was released to uphold him, as it is to us when we trust and obey God’s Word. We are all called to walk on the Word of God, and as we take each step by faith, God's power is released. We can put pressure on the Word of God and when we lean on it as we walk in faith, it will hold us up. There is a law (force) of sin and death trying to pull us down, but as we walk by faith there is a greater force (God's power) holding us up, a higher law in us (the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus) which sets us free from (overcomes) that law (Rom 8:2).
Peter’s faith He was fine while He looked at Jesus and trusted in His Word, but when he started looking at the wind and waves, he was afraid and began to sink (v30). This was foolish because he had already seen God’s power was greater. In any case what difference did it make if the wind was blowing? It is not as if he could walk on calm water! Natural circumstances are irrelevant to whether the Word and Power of God will work or not, and they will overcome whatever the winds and waves are. Peter’s faith in Christ and His Word connected Him to the power of God which upheld him. But when his attention went off Jesus onto the natural problems and circumstances, when he saw the power of the wind, then unbelief and fear came in and he began to sink. He still had faith in his heart, as evidenced by the fact that he did not suddenly sink. The power of God was still flowing (in a measure) holding him up, but his unbelief (preoccupation with the natural realities, exalting them higher than God’s Word) and fear (expectation of evil based on unbelief that God’s power is insufficient) short-circuited God’s power. Of course as he began to sink, Christ’s Word faded out further from his consciousness and his unbelief and fear increased, accelerating the process. Peter’s sinking was not due to any lack in the Word or power of God, but because he allowed unbelief to come in and disconnect him from the Word of Christ and the power of the Spirit. There are evil forces in the world but God’s power is greater and we overcome by just keeping our eyes on Jesus. If we sink it is not because of the power of the opposing wind, but because of unbelief.

If we start to sink, like Peter, we should turn our eyes back to Jesus and call to Him for help (v30). He will lift us up to walk again (v31). Jesus said to him: “You of little faith, why did you allow doubt (thoughts that differ from God’s promise) into your heart” (v30). Peter did better than the others who did not walk by faith, but stayed in the boat! The problem was that the Word was not sufficiently established in Peter's heart. We need not only to know the Word, but to have it established strongly in us through constant meditation (Psalm1), so that when the winds blow and the waves beat against our lives we are not moved from the Word in our heart and our eyes stay fixed on Jesus. With weak faith, we walk a bit, but when problems hit we start to sink. With strong faith we have decided to believe the Word whatever the circumstances. The Word is rooted in us and so when the wind blows we are not moved. When God gives us a Word, we need to establish it in our hearts, and then walk on it, acting as if it were true. As we do, God's power will uphold us. We we will walk on God's power, overcoming the gravity of sin, the winds of satan and the waves of opposition, as we look to Jesus, saying, "In all these things, we are more than conquerors through Christ who loves us" (Romans 8:37).
After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.

His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing."

For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."

For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.

The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come."

When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the Feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?"

And there was much arguing among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people."

However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.

He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?" The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"
v21-24 Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgement."

v25-27 Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

v28,29 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

v30 Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

v31 And many of the people believed in Him saying, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?"

v32 The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things about Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

v33,34 Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come."

v35,36 Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What did He mean, "You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?'"

v37-39 On the last day, that great day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
John 7 marks a new phase in Jesus’ ministry, when the focus moves from Galilee (v1) to Jerusalem (v10) for His last 6 months before His death (Tabernacles 32 - Passover 33). The action either takes place in Jerusalem or in one of four extended journeys to Jerusalem:

1. John 7:10-10:21 (secretly to Jerusalem for Tabernacles, October 32),

The setting of John 7 is the Feast of Tabernacles, in October AD 32 (v2), the 3rd and final great Feast of the year and also the most joyful. For at this time all of Israel celebrated the fulfilment of God’s promises. The action moves towards the great climax of one of His greatest declarations (v37-39), where He claims to be the One who fulfils the Feast.

The Feast had various names:

1. The Feast of the Ingathering (Harvest Festival)
   - The whole Harvest was in and so they thanked God and rejoiced in His provision, especially for sending rain from Heaven that made it all possible. They also looked forward to the next year’s Harvest, praying for God to send the rain for it. Ultimately they looked forward to the time of Messiah, for all the Feasts would only be finally fulfilled by the Messiah Himself. There were many prayers for Messiah’s Coming, especially on the Last Day - called ‘the Great Hosanna’. They sung Psalms 113-118 which climax with the prayer that welcomes Messiah’s Coming: “Save now (HOSANNA!) we beseech You, O Lord. O Lord, we beseech You, send now prosperity (salvation). Blessed be He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Psalm 118:25,26). It was prophesied that when He comes, He would pour out the rain of His Spirit upon all, the Harvest of the earth would be reaped and gathered in, and He would reign over the earth.
   - So the Feast is a prophetic picture of Christ. He fulfilled it spiritually in His First Coming, and will fulfil it physically when He comes again. When Christ returns this Feast will be celebrated at the start of the Millennium and will continue to be the main Feast, celebrating God’s fulfilment of all His promises: (1) the completed, ingathered Harvest of people, (2) the abundant rain (the Spirit outpoured), (3) His abundant provision and prosperity, (4) His Kingdom of righteousness and peace over all.

2. The Festival of Booths.
   - For the week they lived in temporary booths (huts or tents). This was to remember their 40 years in the Wilderness. On the 8th Day they had an extra celebration of the fact that they had now come into the Promised Land. This was also looking forward prophetically to the time Messiah would come and bring them into their full inheritance (both spiritually and physically).

It is in this setting that Jesus must make His dramatic declaration - that He alone will fulfil the Feast. Before we get to this, we are given the build up to it, which gives it greater impact when we see the courage and wisdom it took for Jesus to position Himself to make this vital announcement.
1. The Jewish Leaders waiting to kill Him: “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand” (v1,2). We are now 6 months before the Cross, and we are already in its shadow. It was a dangerous time for Jesus, for He had to go to the Feast. They knew this and were looking out for Him.

2. He had a foolish family to distract Him:
“His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go to Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works (signs) that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world. For even His brothers did not believe in Him” (v3-5). In their carnal thinking they suggested He should promote Himself, not knowing the danger He was in. He had to walk in God’s will. “Then Jesus said to them, "My time (to go up) has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil (He could not go with them in public, because of the threat against Him. He had to be careful to walk in God’s timing. You go up to this Feast (‘join the caravan, go with the crowd of pilgrims’). I am not yet going up to this Feast, for My time has not yet fully come." When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee. But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the Feast, not openly, but as it were in secret” (v6-10). The law required Him to go to the Feast, but He had to do it in God’s way.

3. “Then the Jews sought Him at the Feast (to kill Him) and said: "Where is He?" And there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people." However, none spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews” (v11-13). We see here that it was public knowledge that the leaders were hostile to Jesus and planned His death.

4. Finally Jesus appeared in public: “Now about the middle of the Feast, Jesus went up into the Temple and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, "How does this man know letters, having never studied?" Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine (teaching) is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether
I speak on My own authority.” This is a key verse on knowing God’s guidance. Our ability to hear from God depends on whether our motives are right. If our desire and will is to know and to do His will, then we will recognise what it is. We must establish this in our heart by praying: ‘Your will be done, not mine.’ Then He can form His desires in our heart (Psa37:4). “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him” (v14-18). The mark of a true Teacher is that he glorifies God, and not himself. They would have seen this in Jesus.

5. Jesus accuses them of planning His murder: “Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?” The people answered saying, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?" (v19,20). They were guilty of lying, for they knew He spoke the truth.

6. Jesus answers the accusations against Him: “Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work (miracle) and you all marvel ( for they thought He broke the Sabbath by healing a man - see John 5). Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? Don’t judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgement" (v21-24). Thus healing a man on the Sabbath does not break the Law, but fulfils it (by love - Matt 22:36-39)

7. They tried to take Him, but failed: “Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? But look! He speaks boldly (publicly) and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?” Then they answer their own question in the negative: “However, we know where this Man is from (they are wrong) but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from (wrong again!)"(v25-27) “Then Jesus cried out as He taught in the Temple (knowing their thoughts), saying, "You both know Me (do you?) and you know where I am from (do you?), I have not come of Myself, but He (the Father) who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me" (v28,29).
“Therefore, they sought to take (arrest and kill) Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour (to die) had not yet come” (v30). The only reason they could not touch Him was God. Since He walked in God’s will, fulfilling God’s mission, He was shielded by God, and His enemies could not touch Him. There was nothing satan could do to stop Him. This truth applies to us today.

“Many believed in Him, saying, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this man has done? The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the Chief Priests sent officers (again!) to take Him” (v31,32).

“Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer (another 6 months), and then I go (ascend) to Him (the Father) who sent Me. You (Israel) will seek Me and not find Me (the Messiah), and where I am (Heaven) you cannot come" (v33,34). This was a prophetic word of judgement. Those who reject Jesus Christ will seek the answers to life but not find them, and though they seek a way to Heaven they will not find it. “Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the (Jewish) Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks (Gentiles)? (v35, this was an unwitting prophecy of what Christ would do in the Church-Age-see Book of Acts). They were puzzled by this saying (v36).

8. The Last Day  Knowing His enemies were out to kill Him, Jesus had been very careful to walk in God’s plan. They thought they had limited His impact, but He had saved His best until last! Each Day of Tabernacles there was a special Water Ceremony. A priest would go with a procession to the Pool of Siloam to collect water which would then be poured out under the altar, after they had marched around it. On the Last Day this was done with great rejoicing and prayers, and they marched around it 7 times. This looked back to Jericho and the possession of the Promised Land and God’s faithful provision of rain. But it also looked forward to the Messiah who would truly fulfil the Feast. He would bring Israel into her full inheritance (her Land) and pour out His Spirit upon all believers. The air was filled with loud praise and prayer for Messiah to come and fulfil the Feast, so much so that this Day was called “the Great Hosanna” (meaning: ‘Come, save now’).
When the ceremony was done, a quietness descended.

At last the time had come for Christ to make His great Announcement: “Your prayers are answered, I am here.”

Everything had been preparing the way for this:

“On the Last (the 7th) Day, that Great Day of the Feast,
Jesus stood and cried out (loudly and courageously to the assembled thousands), saying: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink ('I am the Source of Life').

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, “out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

The Bible said that Messiah would come and pour out God’s Spirit upon all believers, with such abundance that we will not just be blessed (filled and satisfied), but that we would also overflow with the Spirit (be a blessing to others, Psalm 23:5).

The invitation is to ‘anyone’, the only precondition is to have ‘thirst’ (desire for God’s life), to receive we must ‘come to Jesus’ (for He is the only Source of God’s life) and ‘drink’ (personally receive by faith).

John then explains when this was fulfilled:

“But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him (Jesus) would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified”(v37-39).

He had to first die on the cross to pay for the outpouring of the Spirit, then rise again and ascend into heaven to receive it from the Father, and then freely pour out the Holy-Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts2:33). So now all who thirst for supernatural life must come to the crucified, risen and ascended Jesus in faith, to drink from the water of life that He continually pours forth.

“He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev22:1).

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts” (Rev21:6).

17. Division over Christ (John 7:40-53)
After He made His great Declaration in John 7: 37-39, the division over Christ intensified.

v40 Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this Saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." (Deut 18:18)

v41,42 Others said, "This is the Christ."

But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was (Micah5:2)?"

Of course, had they checked the Temple records they would have seen He was born in Bethlehem. The Leaders, with access to the Temple records knew Jesus was of the royal Davidic line and was born in Bethlehem, but they suppressed this information, having already made up their minds against Him, as their response to Nicodemus showed (in v47-52).

v43 So there was a division among the people because of Him.

v44 Now some of them wanted to take (arrest) Him, but no one laid hands on Him. When they again sent officials to arrest Him; none of them could lay hands on Him, for God restrained them.

v45 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him (to us)?"

v46 The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

When they heard Him speak, God’s anointing on Him so overwhelmed them that they couldn’t move against Him.

v47 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived?

v48 Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?

v49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

They have to resort to insults to try and convince the people!

v50,51 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

v52 They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."

v53 And everyone went to his own house.
v1-11 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
Now early in the morning He came again into the Temple,
and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.

Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery.
And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him,
"Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the
law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" This they
said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him.

But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did
not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to
them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."
And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.
Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one,
beginning with the oldest even to the last.

And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.
When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her,
"Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"
She said, "No one, Lord."
And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

v12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying,
"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in
darkness, but have the light of life."

v13 The Pharisees therefore said to Him,
"You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."

v14,15 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself
My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going;
but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.
You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.

v16 And yet if I do judge, My judgement is true;
for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.

v17 It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.
v18 I am One who bears witness of Myself,
and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

v19 Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?"
Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father.
If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."
These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the Temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, "Where I go you cannot come'?"

And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

Then they said to Him, "Who are You?"

And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."

As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, "You will be made free'?"

Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father"

They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father."
Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father-God"

v42-44 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

v45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.

v46 Which of you convicts Me of sin?

And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?

v47 He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

v48 Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

v49,50 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honour My Father, and you dishonour Me. And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

v51 Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he shall never see death."

v52,53 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, "If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

v54 Jesus answered, "If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing. It is My Father who honours Me, of whom you say that He is your God.

v55,56 Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, "I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

v57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

v58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

v59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.
“If the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed” (v36).
Jesus is the One who came to set us free from sin (see v34):
(1) From the Penalty and Curse of sin (spiritual and eternal death),
(2) from the Power of sin, and
(3) finally even from the Presence of Sin (at the resurrection of our bodies)

The Woman Caught in Adultery:
This story illustrates how Jesus saves us from the penalty and power of sin.
The Test: “Now early in the morning He came again into the Temple and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery (where is the man?!). And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him” (v2-6a).

The Woman was clearly guilty, this was never disputed, even by her. Perhaps, with her husband away, she had got caught up in the excitement of the Feast. The Men were not on a moral crusade, cleaning up the streets of Jerusalem out of love for the Lord or zeal for the Law. If this was so, where was the guilty man? Neither did they have any concern for the woman, as they shamed her before the crowd. They could not care less about her. She was trash to them. Their only interest was to use the woman as bait to discredit Jesus. They were cleverly trapping Him between ‘the horns of a dilemma’:

The Test: (1) If He agreed with Moses, and said “stone her”, He would be in trouble with the Romans, who reserved the power of capital punishment to themselves. Moreover He would lose His popularity with the people as the One who has mercy on sinners (it was this popularity with the crowds that restrained the Jewish leaders from moving against Jesus to arrest Him)
(2) But if on the other hand, He let her off, He will clearly be contradicting Moses and would therefore be discredited as a false teacher. So, while they were apparently putting her on trial, they were really putting Jesus on trial. But He will turn it around and put them on trial!

“But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, (their sins as a record against them) as though He did not hear”(v6b). p93
He was drawing attention away from the woman to himself. Some manuscripts say He was writing down the sins of her accusers and I think that has to be right. The word used for ‘wrote’ can be used for writing a record against someone. I imagine Him looking at each man in turn and writing down their key sin, by a word of knowledge. For one it might be a mistress, for another a secret sin, for another something they had done that their peers knew about. The suspense was building! Under Roman law, the judge would write His verdict before speaking it. Jesus was saying to them: "OK, you want be to be the judge, I will be your judge. Let me write down the charges against you!"

“So when they continued asking Him (they kept pushing for His answer, because they thought they had Him trapped, although I think they gradually got quieter) it dawned upon them that one by one He was nailing them (their sins were being exposed) from the eldest to the youngest) He raised Himself up (as a Judge delivering His verdict, for while the Jews sat to teach, they stood to proclaim) and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone" (v7). So, He agreed with Moses that the sin was worthy of death (Jesus does not MINIMISE SIN. He upheld the Law). But He caused the men to examine themselves rather than judge the woman, for they were sinners also deserving of death. When we want to throw stones at others, Jesus tells us to examine ourselves first and make sure our motives are right. If we are perfect, then we will have the right to judge.

“And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground” (v8). Having forced them to examine themselves, He gave them time to think, while he continued to write out their sins. “Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last.” This was amazing. He had turned the tables on them and brought them into judgement. They found themselves guilty before the Judge, their sins exposed. Not one could say he was sinless and so they were disqualified from being her judge and executioner. They were also afraid of further exposure. Now there was only One who was qualified to be her Judge and executioner, because He (Jesus) was sinless: “And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst” (v9).

“When Jesus had raised Himself up (to make His judgement) and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where
are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" (v10). She said, "No one, Lord." This shows her faith in Him and her willingness to live His way for she called him ‘Lord’. “And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (v11).

How could Jesus not apply the Law by having her sentenced to death? How could He forgive her and show her mercy when justice had to be satisfied. Was the Law wrong, which revealed that God’s Justice required such sin to be punished by death? No, the Law is righteous: “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Her sin deserved death, and Jesus came to fulfil the law. He could only show mercy because of the Cross, which was set for 6 months time. For then the woman’s sin would be put on Jesus, and He would die as a substitute in her place. He paid the just penalty of death for her and for our sins too. The Cross was a certainty in God’s mind even before it happened. That is why He could forgive her and give her a second chance. He saw the work of the Cross when He said those wonderful words: "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." He is the God of the Second Chance! These are great words that He says to us when we come and confess our sin.

1. He first delivers us from the Penalty of Sin: “Neither do I condemn you.” Remember it is only His verdict that counts, for ultimately He is the only one with the right to judge us.

2. Then, He delivers us from the Power of Sin by saying: “go and sin no more.” “Leave your life of sin, I set you free by the power of My word to live a new life in Me.” By these words Jesus shows that when He forgives us, He is not saying it is OK to sin. Sin is a serious matter and forgiveness is a costly matter. He had to die to pay for our forgiveness. By commanding us: ‘Sin no more’, He shows that He expects us to turn from sin and live different. This means He must give us a new power, that enables us to overcome the power of sin. He does not just forgive us, but imparts to us a new-life that replaces the old ways. We are enabled to live this life (as the woman was) by hearing His Word: “go and sin no more”, and then by living by faith in that word and in the power He provides.

So when we trust in Jesus, confessing Him as our Lord, He first sets us free from the penalty of sin. He says to us: “Neither do I condemn you.” We are forgiven. This is Justification.
Moreover our spirits are reborn. We are born of God, New-Creations in Christ, made with Hiss pure (resurrection) life and light- that has already overcome sin, death and satan. We were spiritually dead, under the power of sin (the sin-nature in our flesh inherited from Adam), but now we are made alive with Christ’s life and (love) nature. We are not just forgiven, but we are freed by receiving His life within. This is Regeneration.

Our spirits are free from the power of sin, but in order for us to live free, we have to live (abide) in His Word. That’s why He gave her His word, that she was forgiven and able to walk free from sin in the power of a new-life: "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." The power was in His Word for her to live and stay free, as she abided and meditated in it. He says the same to us. There is power in His Word. As we meditate on it, our self-image changes, and we receive the faith needed to hook up with power of God, and live by the New-Creation life within, in which we automatically overcome sin and satan. This is Sanctification.

First, the Son sets us free from sin’s penalty and power, making us spiritually alive by the New-Birth: “If the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed” (v36).
Then, He gives us His Word, to renew our minds (self-image) and impart the faith that enables us to live in the reality of this new-life and freedom:

“Jesus said to those who believed Him,
(1) If you abide (take up your home) in My Word, you are My disciples indeed.
(2) And you shall know the truth (of the Word) and the truth (you know) shall set you free (from sin and curse)" (v31,32)
Let the Word fill your thoughts for then the truth (reality) of who you are in Christ will dawn upon and grow within you, and you will live from your reborn spirit in the power of the Spirit, and not from the power, motivation and independence of the flesh. You will find yourself living free from the power of sin. Jesus has set us free, but to live free from sin we must KNOW the truth revealed in His Word.

Believe and Confess (see Romans 5:5; 6:1-11, 2Cor 5:17,21; Col 1:13):
“I am a New Creation in Christ. I am born of God. I am no longer a child of satan, but I am a child of God. Christ’s life and love-nature is in me.”
I am the righteousness of God in Christ.
I have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness
and translated into the kingdom of God.
I can do all things through Christ who infuses me with his strength.

God’s mighty power is working within me, the same power that worked in Christ when God raised him from the dead and exalted Him far above all principality and power and every name that’s named

My spirit is risen with the resurrection life of Christ above the power of sin. I am alive to God and dead to sin. I have been set free from the power of sin. I am no longer under its dominion.”

We have seen that Jesus is our Saviour from the penalty, curse and power of sin, as illustrated in the story of the woman caught in adultery, when he told her: “Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more.” He followed this with the claim that He is man’s only true liberator from sin, satan and death: “If the Son sets you free (from sin’s penalty and power), you shall be free indeed” (v36). This time, we will see from John 8, how Jesus describes the problem of sin, and how He is the only Solution.

**The Problem of Sin Revealed.** The picture Jesus paints in John 8 is of the world walking in the darkness of sin. People are lost and do not know the way. Sin, like a disease has infected all men, corrupting their nature, making them slaves of sin. They are under the curse and penalty of sin (spiritual and eternal death). He is in the kingdom of darkness ruled over by satan. So when He says: “If the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed” (v36) - this is what He is setting us free from.

1. **Man is a Slave to Sin.**

   When Jesus said He had come to set them free (v31,32), the Jews said, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone (only to Egypt, Rome, Babylon, Assyria etc !!!!). How can You say, "You will be made free'?” (v33) “Jesus answered them, "Surely, surely, I say to you, whoever commits SIN is a slave of SIN” (v34).

2. **Man is under the Penalty of Sin (Death).** Jesus gave this warning: "I am going away, and you will seek Me (the Messiah), and will die in your sin (because they rejected the only One Saviour). Where I go (Heaven) you cannot come” (v21). “So the Jews said,
"Will He kill Himself, because He says, "Where I go you cannot come'"? (v22). They misunderstood Him but He was saying that to reject Him is to reject salvation from sin. It’s like rejecting a doctor who has the only antidote for some poison you have in your blood from a deadly bite (you have to believe him and receive the cure or you are dead). “You will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins" (v24) “A slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever” (v35). Slaves of sin (even if Jewish) can’t abide in God’s House forever, they’ll be excluded from God’s Kingdom (eternal death). Only sons have eternal life, because by nature they belong in God’s House. To be saved slaves must become sons (of God).

3. Man is in the KINGDOM OF SATAN. "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world" (v23). “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins" (v24).

As God is the Head of His spiritual Family, who share His Nature (righteousness, love and truth), so satan is the spiritual head of his family or kingdom, who share his nature (sin, hatred and deceit).

Jesus said that their spiritual father was the devil and their life proved it, because of their murder and lies. If God was their spiritual Father they would show His nature in their lives and love Jesus. If Abraham was their father, they would believe and do the works of Abraham: "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father (He leaves them a puzzle, who is their father if it is not God?).

They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father."

Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this” (v37-40). He says: “Wrong answer. Abraham is not your spiritual father, for your lifestyle and works reveal who your spiritual father really is.”

But, Jesus said: “You do the deeds of your (real) father (again He leaves them hanging with this puzzle as to who is their real spiritual father).

Then they said to Him (again they try and supply the answer,
for they deduce that if it not Abraham then it must be God): "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father-even-God" (v41)
This had a double meaning. First, they were not like Gentiles born outside of a (Marriage) Covenant with God. Therefore they as individual Jews were true children born of Mother Israel and Father God. However, there was also a veiled insult to Jesus here that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, and therefore they insinuated He was born of fornication, so who was He to speak to them like this.

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word" (v42,43). He was saying: “Wrong answer again! If God was your Father, we would be family as I am His Son and you would love Me, but you hate Me. We would talk the same language and be on the same wavelength, but you don’t understand Me).”

Now He gives them the right answer: “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do
He was (1) a murderer from the beginning,
and (2) does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.
When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature,
for he is a liar and the father of it (they were acting like their father in (1) planning to kill him and (2) lying about it, by denying it).
But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me” (v44,45).

Our lifestyle and works reveal who our real spiritual father is.

**JESUS - OUR ONLY SAVIOUR FROM SIN**
Having revealed the PROBLEM of sin, death and satan, now let us look at the SOLUTION as revealed in John 8. His Name is Jesus!

1. **JESUS claimed to be God, the ‘I AM’** - for He has to be God in order to be able to save us (for nothing less could do). This is what He claimed of Himself in John 8, and as a result they tried to stone Him: "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, ‘I AM’. Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (v58,59).
The central claim of Jesus in John 8 is in verse 12, where He claimed to be the Light that shines in the darkness of the world: “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I AM the LIGHT of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

This is one of His ‘I AM’ claims of Deity, for only God can rescue us from the darkness of sin and death.

Four other times in John 8, He makes this claim of Deity.

(i) “For if you do not believe that ‘I AM’ (not just: ‘I am he” as in some translations, but the ‘I AM’), you will die in your sins” (v24).

This is a crucial revelation because only the God-man can save us from sin and we must believe upon Jesus as Lord (God) to be saved.

(ii) "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that ‘I AM’ (v28).

His claims of Deity are confirmed by the resurrection.

(iii) “Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them: "The Beginning (the Alpha, the Source, the ‘I AM’):

just as I have been saying to you” (v25, a difficult verse retranslated).

(iv) "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM" (v58).

The Jewish leaders knew what He was claiming and challenged Him. “The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true" (v13). They are twisting a legal rule here that a man in a Jewish court cannot testify of himself and his character, to try and deny His right to declare who He is (see 5:31) However Christ’s testimony to Himself is valid, as it is based on His perfect self-knowledge:

Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one” (v14,15).

He also has the Father’s testimony supporting Him (v16-18).

“And yet if I do judge, My judgement is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

This testimony is manifested through the WORD (the prophetic scriptures of Christ), and through His WORKS (His miracles, especially His resurrection from the dead on the third day (Romans 1:4).
“Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?"
Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also" (v19).
Their ignorance and rejection of the Father’s testimony only revealed their own spiritual state.

“Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honour My Father, and you dishonour Me (God). And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges” (v48-50).

Then Jesus reasserted His claim to Deity: “Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My Word he shall never see death" (v51).
He is claiming power over death, which belongs to God alone. Jesus will ultimately prove His claims by His resurrection, but it was important that He established these claims in advance during His life, which adds the further proof of fulfilled prophecy.

Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, "If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets (who) are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?" (v52,53).

Jesus answered, "If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing. It is My Father who honours Me, of whom you say that He is your God (v54). Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him (from eternity). And if I say, "I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word” (v55).

Jesus now answers their question as to whether He was greater than Abraham, using it to reassert His claim to Deity:
“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day (the day of the Messiah), and he saw it (in a vision, and through the eyes of faith) and was glad (because he saw that Messiah would bring salvation to all nations)" (v56).
God revealed to Abraham the Coming of the Messiah (Galatians 3:8, see Genesis 15:1-6, 22:8,13,14). By saying that Abraham saw ‘My day’ this was a clear claim to be the Messiah. Also Jesus spoke as if He personally witnessed this event (which He did), which implies His pre-existence.
“Then the Jews said to Him (realising He was claiming to have seen Abraham), "You are not yet fifty years old (actually He had just past His 33rd Birthday which was at Tabernacles 33 AD), and have You seen Abraham?" (v57). Jesus said to them: "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM" (v58).

Then they took up stones to throw at Him (for claiming to be God, but according to their own scriptures the Messiah would be the unique God-man (Isa 7:14, 9:6), so when He came they should not have been shocked at Him claiming this for Himself!); but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by” (v59)

2. He had to be a man free from sin Himself, in order to set us free. Jesus claimed to always live in the presence of the Father, depending on Him and obeying Him in all things, always doing what pleased Him: “I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the son of man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him" (v26-29, see also v55).

“Which of you convicts Me of sin?” (Silence, even His enemies could not point to any character flaw in Him or anything He has done wrong). “And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?” (Silence) (v46). “He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God" (v47).

Only a Freeman can set a slave free, not another slave. “Whoever commits sin is a SLAVE of sin” (v34), but “if the SON sets you free, you shall be free indeed” (v36). He is saying that all men have sinned and are slaves (of sin), but He is the Son and not a slave (He is sinless), and therefore has the power to set us free.

How is it possible for Jesus to be born a man, yet have no sin? We all inherit a sin-nature (in the flesh) from Adam through our natural father, so all men are born slaves of sin (in the flesh). But Jesus had a Virgin Birth (no human father), and so was not born a slave of the sin-nature.
3. To confirm His words and complete His work of salvation, He had to die and rise again.

"When you lift up the Son of Man (on the Cross), then you will know that I AM (by the witness of the Father in the resurrection), and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things" (v28). In His death and resurrection, He saved us from sin, satan and death. Therefore: “if the SON sets you free, you shall be free indeed.”

Our sin (sin-nature) along with every consequence and curse of sin was put on Christ and judged. He rose victorious over sin, satan and death and released the blessing of abundant and eternal life to us, by which we overcome. Thus He reversed the curse, giving us life instead of death: “Surely, surely, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death (He broke the power of sin and death)” (v51).

**HOW CAN I BE FREE?**

Jesus is the only One with the cure for sin but we have to receive it.

1. Receive Christ - and be born again. Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits SIN is a slave of SIN. And a SLAVE does not abide in the house (God’s Kingdom) forever (this means eternal death, exclusion from God’s Kingdom), but a SON abides forever (you have to become a child of God to be saved, you must be reborn as a son of God to receive eternal life in the Kingdom and a new nature that is free from sin). Therefore if the SON sets you free, you shall be free indeed” (v34-36). Only the Son (Jesus) can change you from a slave to a son.

He promised to do this in v12: "I AM the LIGHT of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." The setting for this great claim is ‘the Treasury (in the Women’s Court) of the Temple’: “These words Jesus spoke in the Treasury, as He taught in the Temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come” (v20). During Tabernacles (which had just ended), four massive Menorah stood in the Women’s Court and illuminated all Jerusalem at night. This was a prophetic picture of the Messiah who would be the Light of the world. Jesus now claimed to be ‘the Light’ shining in the darkness ‘of the world.’ “Jesus is the true Light, which, coming into the world, gives light to every man” (1:9).
He said: “**He who follows Me** (Jesus) **shall not walk in darkness.**” When we turn to Jesus you receive His nature (sonship), and so come out of the darkness of sin and death in satan’s kingdom into the light of love and holiness, walking in the light of His Word. So, we can now walk by the light of His life, love and holiness (within) and His Word (without).

He promised we would “**have the light of life.**” We would not just have His light to show us the way, but we would receive and possess ‘**the light of life**’ within - we would be a light, radiating His life (c.f. John 7:37). **This is the New-Birth!** His life comes into us and shines within us and through us. **“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men”** (Jn 1:4). We have a new life-source of light within! Before, our old spirit-man was under the dominion of the sin-nature in the flesh, but in Christ our spirit is reborn, we are a New-Creation, a New Man (this is the real me!).

A Paraphrase of Romans 6:1-11 describing the radical change brought about by our New Birth in Christ. The sin-nature is still in our flesh (and will be until the resurrection). The old-(spirit) man was under its power, but our new-man (our reborn spirit) has risen above it, since it is united to the resurrected life of Christ which has already overcome sin, satan and death. So, the ‘real me’, the New-Creation Man has already overcome sin:

“Our Old-Man (spirit) died with Christ, and so now we are freed from sin, because sin and satan has no power over the New Man. We were put into Christ, and so when He died and was buried, our Old-Man also died and was buried with Him, and as Christ was raised from death by the power of a new-life, our spirit was raised with Him. Thus our New-Man consists of His resurrection life and nature. The Old-Man was crucified with Him, so that the body of sin (the sin-nature) might be rendered inoperative (no longer slaves of sin). The New-Man is risen above sin. The real me has already overcome sin. Sin no longer has dominion over us. The New-Man has Christ’s resurrection life and so is no longer subject to death. The life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise we reckon ourselves as dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ.”

**2. Walk in the Word, in the truth of the revelation of who you are in Christ.** “As He spoke these words, many believed in Him” (v30). Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him (this is teaching for believers)
"(1) If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.
(2) And you shall know the truth, and
(3) the truth (you know) shall set you free (from sin and curse)" (v31,32)

This is for teaching believers who have been born-again and set free. They now need to study the Word to know the truth of Christ has done for and in them, so that they can live free. He tells us to abide (take up our home) in the Word, letting it fill and control our thoughts and the truth (reality) of who we are will grow and we will live out from our reborn spirit rather than our flesh. We will find ourselves free from the power of sin.

Imagine you are a slave set free and now you are a son in the house. The slave-master (sin) is still present. He may still call to you and try to tell you what to do, but you don’t have to respond - he has no more dominion over you, no more right to boss you. Now if you don’t ‘know the truth’ of what has happened to you and who you are now (for the Son has set you free by making you a son, giving you His life and nature as well as authority over sin and satan), you can still have a slave-mentality and obey the slave-master. But if you know the truth (Romans 6:3,6,11), you can rise up, when sin calls, and say: “I’m no longer a slave but a son. I’m not under your control. Now you are under my authority. Yes, I acted that way before but that’s not the real me. I am a new Creation, I am the righteousness of God in Christ, alive to God and filled with His love” (2Cor 5:17,21; Romans 5:5, 6:11).

A Paraphrase of John 8:31,32,36:
“The Son has set me free indeed, and because I know (from the Word) this truth that the Son has set me free (by the New Birth), by faith in this truth, I now live and walk free from the condemnation and power of sin and its curse.

The truth is that I have a new nature (I am a new man) and have a new power to live life unto God (I have a new-life).

By believing and acting on this truth, I experience the reality of it in my life, the reality of the power of God to live a new-lifestyle. I can enjoy this freedom to be who I am in Christ.
Thus (1) the Son has set me free (giving me a new nature and a new spirit-life that is free from sin) and (2) knowing this truth sets me free, releasing me to live a new lifestyle that’s free from sin.”

Thus both the Son and His Truth (Word) set me free. Both are necessary.

(1) The Son sets us free by His death, resurrection, regeneration and life-impartation. I must have His direct power in the New-Birth and His ongoing supply of the Holy-Spirit.

(2) Revelation of His Word sets me free. I must know the truth of His Word, so that I can walk by faith in (1) and experience its reality.

(1) First the Son sets me free from sin in my inner man by the New Birth, changing my nature from a slave to a son.

(2) Then, His Word enables me to live in the reality and freedom of this new-life. The truth sets me free from sin in my walk and talk, for knowing it enables me to live free.

These two points correspond to the God and Man sides of sanctification:

(1) God must do it. Only God can set us free from sin.

(2) Man (by using his freewill co-operation) must receive it, by believing it and walking in it (by faith in the Word).

POSITIONAL TRUTH.
The personal teaching of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the Gospels is foundational to the New-Testament. The basis for the Doctrine of POSITIONAL TRUTH (Who we are in Christ through the New-Birth), which is found especially in the writings of the Apostle Paul, is John 8:31-36. Paul’s way of teaching sanctification by grace is to tell believers the TRUTH in Christ of what has been done for them and in them by God, and then urge them to act and live in the light of that, which in turn brings about the manifestation of the new-life within, causing us to be transformed from the inside out, and so become more like Jesus Christ in our character.

v1 Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

v2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

v3,4 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him, I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.

v5 As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."

v6 When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

v7 And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

v8 Therefore the neighbours and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?"

v9 Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." He said, "I am he."

v10 Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

v11 He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, "Go to the pool of Siloam and wash." So I went and washed, and I received sight."

v12 Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

v13 They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees.

v14 Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

v15 Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

v16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath."

v17 They said to the blind man again,"What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

v18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight.

v19 And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

v20,21 His parents answered them and said,
"We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself."

v22 His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.

v23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

v24 So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner."

v25 He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

v26 Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

v27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

v28,29 Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from."

v30-33 The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvellous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

v34 They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

v35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

v36 He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

v37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."

v38 Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshipped Him.

v39 And Jesus said, "For judgement I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

v40 Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

v41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, "We see.' Therefore your sin remains.
This was the 6th Sign Jesus did in the Gospel of John. As in John 8, it is soon after Tabernacles AD 32 in Jerusalem. We saw Jesus claim: “I AM the Light of the world, whoever follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life.” That is: they will be born again and be lit up by a new-life given to them, so that they themselves will be lights to the world. This was a a claim of Deity because only God can deliver a man from the darkness of sin, satan and death. Jesus claimed to be the true Saviour: “If the Son sets you free you shall be free indeed!” Now in John 9, Jesus works a miracle (sign) to prove His claim which He repeats in v5: “I am the Light of the world.” This sign also reveals how He brings all men from darkness to light.

John’s Gospel is centred on certain SIGNS - miracles designed to teach a message, revealing Who Christ is and what He does. “Jesus did many other SIGNS...but these (SIGNS) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing you may have life in His Name” (John20:30,31). John 9 is the story of one of these signs - a man born blind receives sight. Jesus uses this sign to establish His claim: “I AM the Light of the world.” In His teaching based on the sign - the physical blindness is a picture of spiritual blindness. The miracle reveals how Jesus, the Light, opens the eyes of men so they might see Jesus and believe and walk in the light (a changed life). Thus this sign gives revelation of the work of Jesus in being the Light and bringing us into the light.

This was no ordinary miracle. Not only was it a congenital illness (from birth) but no one born blind had ever received healing before: “Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind” (v32). In fact before Jesus, there is no record of any blind being healed. Thus, it had special significance as one of the major Messianic Miracles, that by the Jew’s own teaching only the Messiah would be able to do, and hence it would uniquely mark Him out (another is a resurrection after 3 days- see Lazarus, John 12). Such a great miracle was to be a distinctive mark of the Messiah, so that He could be clearly identified. This was reserved for Messiah, because the healing of the blind was symbolic of the greater miracle (which only God can do) of opening our spiritual eyes (we are spiritually blind from birth), for otherwise we could never believe and be saved. The work of God before salvation is vital, for only by God’s grace are we led to a saving faith. Before
we can respond to Christ in faith, He has to open our eyes to see Him.

The prophets also predicted that one of the clear signs of Messiah was the opening of blind eyes: “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened” (Isaiah 35:5). "I, the Lord, will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a Light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house” (Isaiah 42:6,7). Thus one title for Messiah was THE LIGHT.

Jesus used this to support His claim to Messiahship (Luke 4:18,19): "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me ...to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind (from Isa 61;1,2, 35:5).

“When John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matthew 11:2-5).

The Occasion: “Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth” (9:1). This man and his condition was well-known (v2). Jesus obviously had stopped and was looking intently at Him, for the disciples started discussing him (v2). The Good Shepherd seeks those who are lost in the darkness. When we were lost, we could not see God, but He saw us. He wants to open our eyes that we would see the Light and believe. He comes to us. The blind man cannot see Jesus yet, but he hears His words. Although in our blindness (unbelief) we could not recognise Him (we do not see who He is), He spoke His word to us and started to open our eyes. As with this blind man, so for us, the process of coming to faith starts when we hear His words, we hear Him speaking to us by His Spirit, through the Gospel.

“And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (v2) They saw it as an occasion for a theological question. In Jewish thought all sickness was the result of personal sin (this is sometimes but not always true). But one born sick raises a problem with this. How could a baby sin to cause him to be blind? They could only think of two possibilities:
1. He sinned in the womb (or in a past life).
2. He is eating the fruit of his parents sins.

Jesus shot down both of these options in v3:

“Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned."
He does not give the cause of the sickness because He is more concerned to get the man healed, but Romans 5 makes the answer clear. Death (sickness) does not necessarily come from personal sin, but ultimately it does all come from sin - from Adam’s original sin. Likewise we were all born spiritually blind because of Adam’s sin. The blind beggar is a picture of everyone who comes to faith in Christ, and the sign reveals how Christ opens the eyes of our heart so that we can believe (see Jesus as He truly is)

There is an apparent problem with many translations of v3,4:

“Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him."
This sounds like God made the man blind in order to show off His healing power in him. I have a problem with that. God is not the author of sickness! However if we re-punctuate it reads like this: “Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned." (FULL-STOP) “But that the works of God (healing) should be revealed in him, I must work the works of Him who sent Me” (v4). The work of God is healing not sickness. This healing is therefore a demonstration of what God wants to do for every man, opening his eyes of faith. Jesus is saying: ‘I am not here to get into a discussion now. God has sent me to show in this man the true work of God. I am here to demonstrate God’s works in him.’

In many manuscripts, v4 reads: “WE must work the works of Him who sent US, while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.”
Here He is including His disciples in His ministry. This plural form associates us in this ministry of opening blind eyes. Like Jesus, we only have a limited time for our mission as lights (witnesses) in the world. He is telling us not waste the time and opportunities He gives us.

“As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world" (v5).
In other words: “My work is to bring people from darkness to light. After I am gone from the world, you will be the lights of the world.”
By the New-Birth become lights ourselves and continue His ministry as lights of the world. This agrees with John 8:12: "I am the LIGHT of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but
have the light of life." As God’s Spirit worked through Jesus to bring people to God-awareness and salvation, so He works through us today as we PRAY and WITNESS. Thus this sign also reveals how God wants to work through us to open the eyes of the spiritually blind.

Jesus said: “YOU are the light of the world. A city (a church with many lights in one place, shining in unity), set on a hill (putting the light of her witness on display to the world) cannot be hid (they will have an impact). Neither does one light a lamp (our reborn spirit), and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shines unto all who are in the house. (As it is natural for a lamp to shine, so it is natural for our spirit to radiate a witness to Jesus, by speaking words of life. So don’t hide your witness but let it shine). Even so let your light (witness) shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (because you have been talking of Him)” (Matthew 5:14-16). If they only see your good works, they will just glorify you, but if you also witness you open their heart to God.

God has to first open our eyes before we can believe and be saved:
“...The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, should not dawn upon them” (2Cor4:4). “Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' - and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve (of the Holy-Spirit), that you may see. ...Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev 3:17-20).

After Paul’s eyes were opened to see the light of Jesus, he received this commission for ministry, which applies to us also: “I now send you, to open their eyes (of faith) in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:18). God wants to work through us to open blind eyes so that they can see Jesus (believe) and be saved.
We are lights by the new-birth, but we shine the light of Jesus by our
witness (backed up by good-works):

“Become children of God without blemish in the midst of
a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you are seen as
lights in the world, holding forth the word of life” (Philippians 2:14-15).

So, by sharing the Gospel of Christ, we continue the ministry of Jesus of
opening blind eyes. We do our part, but it is really the work of God as we
shall see:

The Miracle (v6,7): “When He had said these things,
He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva;
and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.
It was as if He filled the empty eye-sockets with the clay. The work of the
Spirit is now required, which is represented by the waters of Siloam.
And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is
translated, ‘Sent’ - for the Holy-Spirit has now been sent to us).
So he went and washed, and came back seeing.”
Then when the man received the washing of the waters of Siloam, when
the waters touched them, the Spirit of God transformed the clay into eyes.

Why did Jesus use such an unusual method to open the blind eyes?
It was a sign. He was acting out a picture of His work in every believer,
how He opens our spiritual eyes to see Him and believe, for we were all
‘blind from birth’. It reminds us of His original creation of Adam: “The
Lord God (Jesus) formed man of the dust of the ground (clay), and
breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit) of life; and man became a
living being (soul)” (Gen2:7). Jesus formed Adam’s body from clay and
then breathed his Spirit of life into him. Likewise the two elements in this
miracle are the clay and the waters of Siloam. Jesus created Adam’s
(man’s) eyes, but sin had made him spiritually blind. So, now Jesus makes
clay again and fills our empty eye-sockets with it, to recreate our eyes and
restore our sight. So by this action, Jesus was showing He was willing
and able to make us new EYES, so that we could see again.

We saw in John 7:37-39 and the related Water Ceremony that Jesus used
the bubbling, flowing waters of Siloam (poured out under the altar at
Tabernacles) to represent the Holy-Spirit ‘sent’ to us through Jesus
after His death, to open our spiritual eyes to see the truth of Jesus
-to see Him and His New Covenant blessings (John 16:7-11).
When the beggar responded to His Word and received the washing (work) of the Spirit he received his sight. When the waters touched him, the Spirit of God transformed the clay into seeing eyes.

Thus the miracle of faith (spiritual sight) happens when we allow the Spirit to touch and recreate our eyes, washing away our unbelief, so that we can see things as they really are.
Only God can do this, but it happens as we respond to His Word (as the beggar obeyed). He also said these same waters would flow through us to others (to open their blind eyes) as they flowed through Jesus to us.

Siloam was a pool created when Hezekiah’s Tunnel was made to bring the fresh water of the Gihon Spring to the people of Zion, so that the people could drink even in the presence of their enemies (Neh3:15, 2Kings 20:20). As the waters were continually SENT through the Tunnel, so the Spirit is sent through Jesus to us, for us to drink freely.

Isaiah 8:5,6 confirms the symbolism: “The LORD spoke: because these people refused the waters of Siloam that flow gently ...(therefore) I will send a FLOOD OF JUDGEMENT (Assyria).” Thus the waters of SILOAM represent the life-giving Spirit of grace.

The Beggar’s Testimony (see how his faith grows, for as his eyes have been opened to see more and more, so also his spiritual eyes of faith gradually come to comprehend more and more of Jesus):

1. To his Neighbours (v8-12): “Therefore the neighbours and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged (he is no longer begging, his life has been changed)?"
Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him (it can’t be him!)"]
He said, "I am he" (note the excitement in his voice).
“Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"
He answered and said, "A man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, "Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.'
So I went and washed, and I received sight."
Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know." His revelation of Jesus at this point is very limited. He had not seen Him. He just knew Him as a man. He did not know who He is or where He lived or where to find Him. He is like those who have heard

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and felt the impact of the words of Jesus and want to know more.

2. **To the Pharisees** (v13-17). “They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes (he had broken the sabbath twice in their eyes:
(1) He made clay and (2) He had healed (you could only prevent somebody getting worse or help if it was a life-threatening case. So for example you could not even set a leg!).

Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight

He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

Therefore some of the Pharisees said:
(blinded by tradition and untouched by the wonderful miracle):
"This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath."

Others (of the Pharisees who could not deny the clear Messianic Miracle) said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.” This great sign should have caused them to humbly reassess their assumptions, and check with the Word, whether He had really broken the Sabbath.

They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?"

He said, "He is a prophet."
Here we see his growing revelation of Jesus as God’s messenger (for each time they press him, he is forced to think deeper).

3. **The Parents verify the healing** (v18-23):
“But the Jews (another group) did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight (they tried to deny the healing because it proved Jesus to be Messiah), until they called the parents of him who had received his sight.

And they asked them, saying,
"(1) Is this your son?,
(2) who you say was born blind?
(3) How then does he now see?"
His parents answered them and said, "We know (1) that this is our son, and that (2) he was born blind; (3) but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself."

His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue (excommunication). Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

4. The Jews re-examine him to try and get him to change his testimony, but he gives it again even stronger. "So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! (‘tell the truth now, God did it, not Jesus ’). We know that this man is a sinner (He broke their sabbath rules)" (v24). "He said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see" (v25).

This is basic true testimony we can all give: “One thing I know: that though I was lost, now I am found” (purpose and destiny). “Though I was (sick, depressed, condemned) now I am healed (saved).”

“Then they said to him again (to find something against Jesus): "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"
He said, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also (as well as me) want to become His disciples?" (v26,27). He is losing patience with them, for their minds were closed and had decided against Jesus. Rather than accepting the healing, they just wanted to find a reason to reject Jesus and the sign. Theirs was not the unbelief of ignorance but wilful rejection of the Light. Notice his faith is growing. He declares his desire to follow and learn more about Jesus.

“Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow (disrespect, they avoid using His name!), we do not know where He is from (a lie - they would have checked the records and seen He was born in Bethlehem)” (v28,29).
He is not intimidated but teaches them using their own logic: “The man answered them, "Why, this is a marvellous thing, that you do not know where He is from (sarcasm); yet He has opened my eyes! (‘let us argue from the facts, shall we’) Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind (it was a clear Messianic Miracle, not just something psychosomatic or a trick). If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing" (v30-33).

This was unanswerable especially for Pharisees.

Now his faith has grown to see that Jesus was sent of God. He was very close now, for if He was a prophet sent of God, who pleased God, then His message must be of God (true). All He needed to discover now is what Jesus says about Himself.

“They answered,"You were completely born in sins (they believed he was born blind because of his sins, see v2!) and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out” (v34). Unable to answer him, they insult and excommunicate him, afraid of his strong testimony influencing others.

The Good-Shepherd finds him again:

“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in ‘the Son of God ?” (v35). (or,‘the son of man’ = the Messiah, both versions are equally valid).

He answered,"Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

And Jesus said to him, "You have both SEEN Him and it is He who is talking with you." Now he has not just heard the words of Jesus but SEES Him. His eyes of faith had been opening and now Jesus reveals Himself clearly. His spiritual eyes are opened to see Jesus - who He really is: the Christ, the Son of God.

“Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshipped Him” (v35-38). His faith has now grown to the next stage, and has become saving faith. He realises and confesses Jesus as Lord (God). His faith issues in worship, he surrenders his life in faith to Jesus as his Lord. Notice that Jesus received his worship. This is the picture of SAVING FAITH.
Summary: This sign is a picture of the greater miracle of our salvation through faith. It reveals the work of Jesus in being the Light and bringing us into the light (faith), by opening our eyes to see Him. Faith is our 6th sense (to know and see) the truth of the Word. The Messiah is the only One who can truly open blind eyes, so that we can be saved, hence it was a Messianic miracle.

It shows the stages of coming to faith until he finally sees clearly.

1. The Problem: The blind beggar represents all men, spiritually blind from birth, poor and lost in the darkness, from Adam’s original sin, without hope. Only Jesus can open our eyes (Eph 2:1,2; 2Cor 4:4; Rev 3:17-20). We can’t even believe (respond) without His grace. God has to first open our eyes, before we can believe and be saved.

2. The Process: Jesus came to the beggar in grace, rather than the other way round. He came to seek and save the blind and the lost. He finds us before we find Him. He comes to us, because in our blindness we are unable to come to Him. He came to the beggar to give him sight.

Likewise He first comes to us to give us spiritual sight (by recreating our eyes). The beggar just heard the words of Jesus, and as he responded and obeyed the light given, his unbelief was washed away and he received sight by the work of the Spirit. Likewise when Jesus finds us us and speaks to us we have to respond (Rev3:20) for we can refuse His help and stay sitting in the darkness on our own.

With his eyes opened, he began to see more and more (his natural and spiritual revelation grew in parallel) until finally he SAW Jesus Himself as Lord (God) and gave his life to Him (saving faith). His faith grew, even under pressure. Likewise, by progressive revelation our eyes are opened to see Jesus as a great man, then a prophet, then as one sent of God to save us, and finally as Who He claimed to be: the Christ, the Son of God. We come to a saving faith in Him. This is the work of God’s Spirit working through the light(s) of the world (witnesses).

Jesus’ teaching from this sign about His ministry applies to us because as He said before, we continue his ministry (revealed in this sign) of being lights (witnesses) to the world. This sign shows how God brings people to the light, through us.
“Jesus said, "For judgement I have come into this world” (v39). We are to bring people to a crisis, to make a decision of either accepting or rejecting the Light (Christ).

Shining the strong light has 2 results:
"For judgement I have come into this world” (to bring men to decision) 
(1) that those (like the beggar) who do not see (these are ignorant, but want to see) may see (by responding to the light given), 
and (2) that those who see (having religious knowledge like the Jews) may be made blind”(v39).

By continually closing their eyes to the Light (in bed early morning!), preferring the darkness, they develop calluses of unbelief, until God gives them over to blindness (judged for rejecting the Light). The Jews had clear light (of the Messiah) but rejected it (closed their eyes), and so their sight got dimmer and they became blind. They continued to look for Messiah but were doomed to stumble around and never find Him.

If you respond to the small light you have, it will grow brighter, but if you reject it, spiritual realities will get dimmer. Opening your eyes to the light (and walking in it) is a process. Don’t expect to see great visions, if you are not doing what has been already revealed. If you close your eyes to the light given to you, how can you see to do greater things ahead? If you are not seeing anything more (‘I don’t know what God has for me’) but do what He told you that you ignored as insignificant. Open your eyes and respond to that light then you will see (to do) more and move forward in your Divine destiny. It is one step at time: go with the light you have.

“Some Pharisees who were with Him heard these words and said to Him,"Are we blind also?"

Jesus said to them,"If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say," We see.' 
Therefore your sin (of rejecting Christ) remains” (v40,41).

Their was a sinful (wilful) rejection of the Light, not from ignorance.
20. Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-42).

v1,2 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

v3-5 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

v6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

v7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

v8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

v9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

v10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

v11 "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

v12,13 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

v14,15 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

v16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

v17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

v18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."
Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?"
Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.

But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep as I said to you

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

I and My Father are one."

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You but for blasphemy and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God"

Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, "I said, "You are gods"'? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming,' because I said, "I am the Son of God'?"

If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."

Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand. And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptising at first, and there He stayed. Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." And many believed in Him there.
Jesus, the Good Shepherd (v1-21). It is in Jerusalem soon after Tabernacles in AD 32. In John 10, Jesus makes some of His greatest claims of Deity which again result in the Jews trying to stone Him (v31-33): “I am the Door of the sheep” (v7, 9), “I am the Good Shepherd” (v11, 14), “I have power to lay ‘my life’ down, and I have power to take it up again (the power to raise Himself from death)” (v18). “I and My Father are one” (v30). The central theme of this passage is Jesus, our true and good Shepherd. To describe His ministry as our Shepherd He used a parable or allegory: “Jesus used this illustration (allegory) but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them” (v6). They should have understood Him because Shepherds and sheep were a major part of life in Israel, and Jesus built on their understanding of what a true shepherd did for his sheep. The relationship between Jesus and His followers is like the Shepherd and His sheep. Church leaders are under shepherds of Jesus, the chief-Shepherd (1Peter 5:2, 3, Acts 20:28, John 21:15-19, Ephesians 4:11) The life of a shepherd in the Judean hills was hard. The ground was rough and stony. There were no lush fields with protecting walls or fences, as with our farms. He had to constantly watch the flock, for the sheep were bound to wander in their search for grass. The sheep who went astray were in great danger of getting lost, or falling, or getting trapped in a bush. Sheep are vulnerable and defenceless and need a shepherd or they are heading for quick destruction. A true shepherd knew and loved all his sheep personally and called them all by name, so he knew when one was missing (Luke 15:3). It was a dangerous job, for he had to guard them against wild animals (wolves) and robbers. A true shepherd was willing to lay down his life to protect the sheep (John 10:11). David, as a shepherd boy, killed a lion and a bear, proving himself ready to take on Goliath, as the shepherd of Israel. Straying sheep are a picture of men in sin, walking away from Christ, the Shepherd and the life and salvation (protection, guidance and provision) He offers: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6a). But the good Shepherd (Jesus) goes after each and every one of His lost sheep to call them back, and save them from death and restore them to the fold (His Kingdom),
even laying down His life to accomplish this: “and the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus, in His death) the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6b). This is taught by the parable of Jesus, the good Shepherd (Luke 15:3-7, Matthew 18:11-14), who lost one sheep and left everything behind to save him and rejoiced when the sinner repented (the sheep was recovered). “You (all) were going astray like sheep; but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop (Overseer) of your souls” (1Peter 2:25). In His death Jesus took on and defeated the destroying forces of sin, satan and death (thieves, robbers and wild-beasts) for us.

A true shepherd lived with his sheep from birth. They knew him and recognised his voice and followed no other. They were trained to only respond to his voice. He would not drive the sheep (no sheepdogs) but lead them going ahead to see if the way was safe. If a stranger called them, they stop and look in alarm and if the call was repeated, they would flee (v5). Sometimes a number of flocks were kept, all mixed together in a communal fold overnight. But they were easily separated when, in the morning, each shepherd would call to his own sheep and they would hear (recognise) his voice and run to him and follow him into the pasture (v3,4).

God is described as the Shepherd of His people:
“The Lord is my Shepherd” (Psalm 23:1).
“We are His people and the sheep of His pasture” (Psalm 100:3).
See also Psalms 77:20, 79:13, 80:1, 95:7.

A true shepherd is a picture of God’s vigilant love, protection and care for us. Likewise, the King of Israel, the Messiah, is also a Shepherd (as the son of David, He is typified by David in this): “He will feed his flock like a shepherd, He will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in His bosom, and will gently lead those with young” (Isaiah 40:11).

God’s leaders are also called shepherds (like Moses and Aaron). Jeremiah and Ezekiel have passages that describe the duties of shepherds, and how the leaders (the shepherds of Israel) have failed to fulfil their responsibilities resulting in the sheep being scattered and lost, and that these bad shepherds will therefore be judged by God (Jeremiah 23:1-3, 50:6, Ezekiel 34:1-10). Then in Jeremiah 23:4-6 and Ezekiel 34:11-16, the Lord declares that He Himself will come to earth to be the Good Shepherd who will save, feed and care for His people. This speaks of the coming of the God-man Messiah as the true and good Shepherd.
Micah 5:2-4 predicted that this Divine Shepherd-Messiah must be born in Bethlehem (fulfilled by Jesus, Matthew 2). Zechariah 13:7 predicted this Shepherd’s death (Jesus claimed to fulfil this in Matt 26:31, Mark 14:27).

Psalms 22 and 23 are also a detailed prophecy of this Good Shepherd-Messiah: (1) Psalm 22 describes in detail His laying His life for us and then His rising from the dead.
(2) Psalm 23 describes the resurrected Lord in His present-day ministry of leading His people into an abundant, whole life in fellowship with Him.

Hebrews 13:20,21 points to Jesus Christ as the true fulfilment of this prophecy: “Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight.”

So when Jesus claimed: "I AM the Good Shepherd (not just ‘a good shepherd’), who gives His life for the sheep” (v11), He was claiming to be the true Shepherd prophesied in the Old-Testament, the Messiah-King, even God manifested in flesh, Who would save, protect and lead His people into good pasture. See also Matthew 9:36, 18:12; Mark 6:34, 14:27; and Luke 12:32, where He confirmed this claim.

Psalm 23:1 declared: “The LORD is my Shepherd”, and Jesus came and said: “I AM He, I am the Lord Himself, I am the Good Shepherd, who will lovingly lead you into an abundant and eternal life. Follow Me!”

In John 10:1-30, Jesus sets forth His Messianic claim to prove Himself to be the Messiah. He uses an extended allegory (parable) to communicate His message, which used the customs of the time to illustrate His role as the Good Shepherd (Messiah), who comes to lead His people (sheep) into abundant life. “Jesus used this illustration” (v6).

The allegory naturally divides into two parts (v1-5) and (v7-18).

In the first part of His parable (v1-5), He shows Himself to be the TRUE Shepherd (Messiah), who alone has the ancestry and entrance (Virgin-Birth) into the earth required to fulfil the prophecies of the true Messiah.

In the second part of His parable (v7-18, and 27-30), He shows Himself to be the GOOD Shepherd, according to prophecy, by proving:
(1) **His good Character** (His Love), in laying down His life down for us (v11,15,17,18),

(2) **His grace, power and ability to lead us into abundant and eternal life** (for ‘good’ does not just signify honourable morality, but also loveliness, beauty, skill and grace). He did this by taking up His life again in resurrection and releasing it to us (v10,11,17,18). The **Good Shepherd** is the **loving, lovely, life-giving** Shepherd.

There were 2 kinds of sheepfolds that appear in the two parts of the story:

(1) The communal ones in the towns where all the flocks were sheltered together at night. They were protected by a strong door, and the doorkeeper alone held the key. In the morning, the Shepherd would come for His sheep, the Doorkeeper would know Him and open to him and he would enter the fold and call to his sheep and lead them into pasture.

(2) But when they grazed in the hills in the warm season, they often did not return at night, but collected the sheep into sheepfolds on the hillside, which were open spaces surrounded by a wall with an opening but no door (the shepherd lay in the gap).

1. **The TRUE SHEPHERD** (v1-5). In the first part of the Parable, Jesus presents Himself as the true Shepherd-Messiah of Israel, who comes to the communal Sheepfold (Israel) in the town, to lead His sheep into a new day and new heavenly pasture (in the hills). He enters by the appointed and necessary Door of a supernatural virgin-birth, and the Doorkeeper (the Holy-Spirit), who alone has the key to this Door, knows Him and opens the Door to Him (Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy-Spirit). He comes into the Sheepfold (Israel) and calls out His own sheep (the believers) by name. They hear His voice and He leads them out. Many Israelites heard (believed in) Jesus and followed Him, and so came out of merely belonging to an earthly (national) fold, into also belonging to a heavenly fold that grazes in the hills (the Kingdom of Heaven).

First we see the communal Sheepfold (Israel): *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the Door (of virgin-birth), but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But He who enters by the Door (of virgin-birth) is the (true) Shepherd of the sheep. To Him the Doorkeeper (the Holy-Spirit) opens”* (v1-3a). The thieves are false religious leaders and messiahs who come to the sheep
pretending to lead them to salvation, but in fact they come to destroy (v10) They are the main enemies of God and the sheep. Beware! (2Cor 11:14).

‘The Door’ speaks of the specific entrance into Israel (the Sheepfold) by which the true Shepherd (Messiah) must come: namely His Birth. The true Messiah is identified by His Birth. He must come through the Door specified by prophecy, with a predetermined pedigree of birth: the seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, then of David’s royal line, and most important, the son of God, born by virgin birth (Gen3:15, Isa 7:14). His time of arrival was fixed by Daniel 9:24, the place must be Bethlehem: “Bethlehem, little town of Judah, out of you shall one come forth unto Me One who is to be Ruler (Shepherd) in Israel; whose origins are from of old, from everlasting (eternity). He shall stand, and shall feed (shepherd) His flock in the strength of the Lord” (Micah 5:2,4). Only such a One qualifies as the true Shepherd. Therefore, the Doorkeeper (the Holy-Spirit) opened the Door for Jesus to come into the Fold through the virgin birth (Luke 1:35). The Holy-Spirit opened the door into Israel for Jesus, and continued to do so later through the John the Baptist. All others are false saviours who end up destroying the sheep (like Muhammad and Buddha). Like thieves trying to steal the sheep, they have to get in another way (illegally), because the Doorkeeper does not know them. This applies especially to the arch-thief, satan and his antichrist.

“To Him the Doorkeeper (the Holy-Spirit) opens and
(1) the sheep hear His voice and He calls His own sheep by name, and (2) (He) leads them out” (v3). His sheep are the true believers.

This is a wonderful picture of our salvation through faith.
(1) We hear Him speak to us through the Gospel, as He calls us by name to come to Him (Romans 10:17). We believe (trust) Him and respond to (obey) His voice.

(2) When we respond to Him, trusting in His Word, He leads us out of the old penned-in life into a new life of freedom with Him, out of the darkness into following Him in the light of a new day, out of an earthly (national) fold into the kingdom of heaven, out of a merely natural life in this world into life in the hills (a new spiritual dimension in ‘heavenly places’).
“And when He brings out His own sheep, He goes before them; and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice” (v4).
He shows us the way to live. He does not drive but leads us. He does not ask us to do what He has not done first. We are to follow Him. We can do this because believers know His voice (claim this verse by faith, say: “I hear the voice of Jesus. He is my Shepherd. He leads and guides me.”) He keeps speaking to us and we hear and respond. He always speaks to us with loving reassurance, guidance and correction. As we stay close to Him, hearing and responding to His voice, we abide in peace, safety and blessing.

“Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers" (v5).
The sheep were trained to only respond to their shepherd. If a stranger kept trying to call them they would get alarmed and flee. In our spirit we know false teaching and false voices and flee from them, even if they sound reasonable and soothing. The thief may put on a sweet voice but his motive is to fleece and eat you!

2. The GOOD SHEPHERD (v7-18, 27-30). Secondly, Jesus shows Himself to be the GOOD Shepherd, again in fulfilment of prophecy through: (1) His good Character (His Love), ultimately proved by His Death, when He laid down His life down for us (v11,15,17,18), (2) His grace, power and ability to lead us into abundant and eternal life (for ‘good’ does not just signify honourable morality, but also loveliness, beauty, skill, ability and grace). He ultimately proved this in His Resurrection, when He took up His life again and released it to us (v10,11,17,18). Thus Jesus is the loving, lovely, life-giving Good Shepherd

Thus God’s Shepherd would be marked by His supernatural birth and His sacrificial death. This would show Him to be the Good (gracious) Shepherd who would bring His people into eternal abundant life.

In the warm season in the hills often did not return at night but collected into sheepfolds on the hillside, open spaces with a wall with an opening but no door. At night the shepherd would ‘lay down’ across the opening and nothing could get in or out except over him. He was literally: ‘the Door.’ Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I AM THE DOOR of the sheep” (v7).
Having brought His sheep out of the earthly fold (the world), they now belong to His fold in the hills (the heavenly places of God). The second sheepfold in the hills is God’s heavenly Kingdom. **The Flock** is the Church, fully defined in v16, where Jesus prophesies the Church: “And other (Gentile) sheep I have which are not of this fold (Israel); them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there **will be one flock** (the Church - made up of Jews and Gentiles together) and **one Shepherd** (the Lord Jesus Christ)” (v16). One Roman Catholic error is based on a mistranslation of this that says: “there **will be one fold** (rather than one flock).” The one-fold, they say, must be the Roman Catholic Church, thus excluding all other Churches from validity!

The earthly national folds (where we live alongside the unbelieving sheep - who belong to another shepherd) are just to hold and protect us during the night, but they are not our real home. For our true citizenship and our real life is in the heavenly places with Christ. Our primary identity is in being part of God’s Kingdom and Church, before belonging to any earthly sheepfold (our national, racial or social identity), for: **“we are in the world, but not of it.”** It is only true believers who belong in the spiritual (heavenly) fold. In the warm season the sheep often did not return to the town at night, but were collected into sheepfolds on the hillside. These were open spaces with a surrounding wall, with an opening but no door. At night the shepherd would ‘lay down’ across the opening and nothing could get in or out, except over (through) him. He was literally **the Door of the sheep:** “Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I AM the DOOR of the sheep (believers)” (v7). This is one of Christ’s great ‘I AM’ claims of Deity, which goes hand in hand with: **“I AM the GOOD SHEPHERD.”**

A door is an entrance into a new realm. In this case it is the entrance into the Kingdom of God. **There are two Doors in this passage.** First there is the Door of Physical (virgin) Birth through which Christ came into the earth (v1-3). Then in v7-9, there is the Door of Spiritual Birth (the New-Birth), which is the only way into the Kingdom of God (John 3:3-7). In both cases the Holy-Spirit is the Doorkeeper. Jesus entered through the first Door, and through His death and resurrection He became the second Door. Now He is the Door into life, the entrance way for believers into salvation and eternal life in God’s Kingdom (John 14:6).
To enter life we must go through Jesus. When we come to Him and believe in Him, we are born-again and enter His Kingdom.

“All who ever came before Me (the false messiahs and saviours of Israel who claimed to be God’s shepherds and the doors to salvation) are thieves and robbers (trusting them leads to loss), but the sheep (believers) did not hear (follow) them” (v8).

Only the One who entered through the appointed Door (from God to man) could be the Door for us (from man to God): “I AM the DOOR” (v9a).

Jesus is the only way to God and Heaven, and if we come to God through Him, we are promised a great salvation (v9):

(1) If anyone enters by Me (Jesus), he will be saved (we are saved from sin and judgement and enter life, we are safe from all that would destroy and we are secure in eternal life). The only way into heaven is through Jesus (John 14:6). He laid His life down on the Cross and so became the Door, by which we may enter. He opened heaven’s door for all believers.

(2) and will go in (we have full access to God, and can now freely go into God’s Presence through prayer at any time through Jesus Christ - see Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 10:20),

(3) and (will go) out (into the world through Him). We still live in two worlds, the natural and the spiritual. We live in the world but belong to God’s Kingdom. We are free to come and go. We have authority in Jesus’ Name to enter His Presence, and also to go in His Name and with His Presence into the world. Our salvation provides for our fellowship with God, as well as our protection, health and prosperity in the world.

(4) and find pasture (we have access to God’s blessings and provisions, His spiritual food and life, through His Word and Spirit - v9b).

Jesus now presents Himself as the Good-Shepherd who has come with the purpose of leading us from death to LIFE (v10):

“The thief (satan and his agents) does not come (to us) except to
(1) steal (the enjoyment and blessings of this life),
and (2) to kill (to cut our lives short by physical death),
and (3) to destroy (to cause us to reject Christ and suffer eternal death)” (v10a). This is progressive death, in all its phases.
“(But) **I have come that they may have** (as a possession) **Life, and that they may have it more abundantly** (life that overflows in this life and through all eternity, life abundant and everlasting, never running out)” (v10). Jesus came to deliver us from destruction and bring us into ever increasing life.

In this verse Jesus draws a clear line between good and evil. He makes it clear how to distinguish His work from the devil. It is simple: Satan brings sin, sickness and death, but Jesus brings righteousness, healing and life.

How does He get this Life to us? He is Life and He **GIVES** His life to us: "**I AM the GOOD SHEPHERD.**

**The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep**” (v11).

This is His central claim, to be ‘**the I AM’, ‘the LORD, my SHEPHERD**’ who was promised in prophecy and wonderfully described in Psalm 23, as the One who leads His sheep into fullness of life, abundant and eternal.

How does He give us His abundant life? He gives it in two senses:

**He gives it (1) by laying it down for us in His death** (v11,15,17,18), so that **(2) He could take it up again in His resurrection and give** (release and impart) **it to us**, so we can take it up too:

"**Therefore My Father loves Me, for I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father"** (v17,18).

To give us His abundant life, He had to lay it down for us and put it at our disposal. He took it up again in His resurrection and we can take it up also. **He gave it up for us, to give it out to us.** He laid it down, so that He could take (receive) it up again, in a givable form, to release it to us, putting it at our disposal.

Psalm 22 shows the Good Shepherd in His death and Psalm 23 shows the resurrected Good Shepherd, leading His sheep into the more abundant life. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus became the Door into life, and the fulfilment of Psalm 23. He is the Lord, the Good Shepherd, who died and rose for us to bring us into His life: **“The Lord is my SHEPHERD; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul** (provision, rest, peace, healing): **He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His**
Name's sake (guidance and holiness) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me (protection and security); Your rod (a club, often with nails, especially used against enemies, came to represent authority and was used for the sceptre (symbol of power) of rulers, who were Shepherds of people - symbolic of His Name) and Your staff (like a shepherd’s crook, it was used to bring back straying sheep - symbolic of His Spirit), they comfort me (The Shepherd also was skilful with a sling and stones - symbolic of using the words of God in a fight). You prepare a table before me in the presence of My enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over (total provision, especially of abundant life in the Holy-Spirit). Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever (abundant and eternal life).”

Prophecy told us to recognise God’s Shepherd by:
(1) His miraculous birth (v1-3), (2) His sacrificial death (v11-15) and (3) His victorious resurrection (v17,18).
This proves Jesus to be the (1) true, (2) good and (3) gracious Shepherd, Who brings His people into eternal, abundant life (that never runs out).

The Good Shepherd is marked out from others by His sacrificial love for us, proven by His death on the Cross: “But a hireling, he who is not the Shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep” (v12,13). Jesus cares for us, and so was willing to die for us, taking on the beasts and thieves (sin, satan, curse and death), suffering in our place on the Cross so that we might live.

“I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD; and I know (He has foreknown us, setting His love upon us from eternity) My sheep, and am known by My own (through faith). As the Father knows Me (eternally), even so I know the Father (eternally); and I lay down My life for the sheep (so that they may enter into the Divine Fellowship or mutual knowledge that is between the Father and Son through the Spirit, which is the essence of eternal life, see John 17:3)” (v14,15). His personal love for His sheep is proved in His VOLUNTARILY giving His life for us (it was not the nails but His love for us that held Him to the Cross!):
"Therefore My Father loves Me, for I lay down My life that I may
take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father" (v17,18).

In these verses Christ tells us: (1) He voluntarily gave up His life for us. It was all in the plan and purpose of God. He had the power to save His life from death (Matt 26:53) and showed His mastery over His life to the end by giving up His spirit when He still had plenty of breath (Matt27:50). It was His obedient love for the Father and for us (for our salvation) that took Him to the Cross, rather than being the victim of unfortunate circumstances, or than being overpowered or outwitted by satan.

(2) He laid His life down knowing that He would take (raise) it up again. He died in order to rise again, for by taking humanity through death and resurrection we are saved. Both are necessary for us. The end purpose and result is that ‘I may take it up again.’ His resurrection achieves His goal of bringing many sons to glory with Him. But in order to achieve this, He must ‘lay His life down’ in death.

(3) He claims Deity in these verses, because He talks as One who He had sovereign power over His life and death. Only God can raise the dead, but Jesus here claims that authority and power for Himself. He predicts His resurrection and then proved His claims by raising Himself from the dead (see John 2:19). In this, He acted in full unity with the Father.

Later, Jesus again described the life and salvation He would provide for His sheep: “My sheep hear My voice (faith), and I (fore)know (love) them, and they follow Me (obedience). And I GIVE THEM ETERNAL LIFE (another claim of Deity), and they shall NEVER PERISH (salvation from judgement); neither shall anyone snatch them out of My Hand (safety, security and protection from all enemies). My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand (double security in the hands of the Father and the Son). I and My Father are One (an absolute statement of their full unity of Nature and Being, as well as purpose and work)" (v27-30).

These are key Trinitarian verses. The Son is God, fully equal, yet distinct from the Father and submitted to Him, but the two are One.
Jesus handles objections (John 10:19-42): “Therefore (because of v1-18) there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?"

Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" (v19-21). This refers to the Messianic Miracle of John 9 for according to their own teaching only the Messiah could have done this. Their only desperate explanation was that He did it by the power of the devil, as they had done before in Matthew 12:24 after Jesus had done another Messianic sign - the casting out of a deaf and dumb spirit.

Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem (December 32 / January 33).

and it was winter (between v21 and v22, Jesus had returned to Galilee before coming to Jerusalem again for Dedication, see p84). Jesus walked in the Temple in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly" (v22-24). He had told them again and again, but they did not want to hear it. He avoided using the word ‘Messiah’ because in their mind the Messiah was a political leader who would lead Israel in a victorious war against the Romans rather than a Saviour from sin (the main purpose of His first Coming).

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works (signs) that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep as I said to you” (v25,26). Here He defines His sheep as those who believe in Him. If they were His sheep they would have heard His voice and believed as He said in John 10:3,27. These did not recognise His voice and so were not His sheep. This verse implies that from God’s viewpoint, His sheep (all who believe) are foreknown (elect) from eternity (Eph 1:4). It follows that anyone who is not one of His sheep, will not believe in Him. Jesus then describes His sheep as those who hear His voice (believe) and are secure in their eternal salvation, ending in His claim of equality with the Father (v27-30, see page 132). When He called Himself: “The (one and only begotten) Son”, and God: “My Father” the Jews rightly understood He was claiming Deity, and then when He declared: “I and My Father are One” (v30), they became angry enough to kill Him: “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him” (v31)

Jesus answered them, "Many good works (miracles) I have shown you from My Father (proving His claims). For which of those works do you stone Me?" (v32). “The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You but for blasphemy and because YOU, BEING A MAN, MAKE YOURSELF GOD" (v33).

Jesus answered them (answering their criticism in v33 that a mere man cannot be God), "Is it not written in your law, "I said, "You are gods (Elohim)"? (Psalm 82:6).

If He called them gods (‘Elohim’ - the same word as used for God in Genesis 1:1), to whom the Word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified (set apart for His mission as the Lamb of God from the start of man’s time) and sent into the world (4,000 years later in the incarnation, see Rev13:8, Phil2:7) "You are blaspheming,' because I said, "I am the Son of God"? (v34-36). Jesus is justifying His claim of being God. At first sight (on superficial reading) p133
He seems to be avoiding the key issue, by just saying His language He uses for Himself applies to all men. Of course, this misses the point of His profound argument.

**Jesus is answering a specific objection to His claim to Deity: namely that a Man cannot also be God,** that it is impossible for a God-Man to exist (v33). To answer this, He refers to Psalm 82, where human rulers are called gods (‘Elohim’- the Hebrew name for God): “I have said, ‘Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.’ But ye shall die like men” (v6,7). To support this verse He asserts that Scripture is the inerrant, unbreakable Word of God. We may add that Adam was originally ‘the god (ruler) of this world’ (Gen 1:26, Psalm 8) before he lost this title to satan (2Cor4:4), because he was given dominion (under God) over all things. This shows that ‘god’ can denote a man who rules under God, who carries the authority of God. Of course this does not mean man is eternal God, so how does Psalm 82 justify Christ’s claim to be God?

The issue He is answering is the exact one they raised in v33: ‘How can a man be God as well?’ They correctly understand that by calling Himself ‘the Son of God’ Jesus claimed equality with God, but they have a problem with the idea that a man can also be God, or in other words, that the Divine Nature can be united to a human nature (in the case of Christ this is called the Hypostatic Union). Now many prophecies of the Messiah present Him as being both God and man ( Isa 7:14, 9:6), He is even called God’s Son (Psa2:7) and in Matt 22:41-45, Jesus shows the Jews from Psa 110 that the Messiah is both the human ‘son of David’ as well as the Divine ‘David’s Lord’ at the Father’s right hand. Thus, not only is it possible for the God-Man to exist but that He does exist in the Person of Messiah. Jesus is making a similar argument here. They were wrong to say that a man can’t be God, for man was made in the image of God (hence: ‘children of God’- this was to make a union of the 2 natures possible), to have fellowship with Him, to function, act and be like Him, mirroring Him as much as a finite, created being can be like an infinite, eternal Being. This is so much so, that God calls men by His Name ‘Elohim’ (gods) in Psa 82:6! If ordinary men can be rightly called ‘gods’ and ‘children of the Most High’ because of their created correspondence with the Divine nature, then why should there be a problem with the Anointed One (who is to come from God to man as the Messiah) as true God, choosing to take to (or unite with) Himself a fully human nature, becoming a God-Man and calling Himself ‘the Son of God’?

“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me again to prove; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him" (v37,38). He again points to His unique miracles as the Father’s confirmation of His claims, that He is eternally One with the Father (see v25,32,14:11). This repeated claim to be God stirred them up again: “Therefore they sought again to seize (arrest) Him, but He escaped out of their hand” (v39). And He went away again beyond the Jordan to stay at the place where John was baptising at first, (the locals had heard John’s message often). Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." The outstanding and undeniable public miracles of Jesus combined with the accuracy of John’s prophecy about Christ, formed conclusive twofold proof so that: “many believed in Him there” (v40-42).

v1,2 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

v3,4 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

v5,6 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

v7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

v8 The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

v9,10 Jesus answered, "Are there not 12 hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

v11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

v12 Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well."

v13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

v14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."

v15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

v16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

v17-19 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about 2 miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

v20 Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.

v21-23 Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

v24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."
v25,26 Jesus said to her, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

v27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

v28-31 And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

v32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

v33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

v34 And He said, "Where have you laid him?"
They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

v35,36 Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

v37 And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

v38 Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

v39,40 Jesus said, "Take away the stone."
Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"

v41-43 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

v44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."
After the Feast of Dedication (January AD 33) they tried to arrest Jesus, but He escaped and went into Perea, beyond the Jordan (10:40). From there He toured Perea, before His return to Jerusalem to raise Lazarus (see page 84) in March AD33, about a month before Passover AD 33 when He would die on the Cross for us as the Passover Lamb of God. This was the 7th Sign of Jesus in the Gospel of John and the greatest so far. It reveals His victory over our greatest enemy—death. One sure statistic in life is that one in one person dies. Death seems to be victorious over the whole human race. But we believe in a God who raises the dead! Jesus Himself has conquered death. Our faith in God should be limitless, for we believe in a God who raises the dead. Whatever hopeless situation we might be facing, it is not too far gone. Sometimes we may think that things have got so bad, that it’s so far out that it is even beyond God’s abilities to turn things around, but we believe in a God who raises the dead! If He can raise the dead, He can get you out of your mess, He can turn your sickness around, He can turn your finances around, He can turn your family around. Death to us is the final word, the ultimate, but it is not the last word for the God of resurrection and He proves it in this chapter.

“Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha” (v1). This was a progressive sickness. Everyday he was getting a bit worse. Lazarus had an interesting name for it means: ‘God is my help’ and this came to pass as we shall see. He is called: ‘Lazarus of Bethany’, which is significant. Bethany means ‘the house of the afflicted one’. Lazarus is a picture of all men, born in sin, hopelessly afflicted under the curse of death. Sin is like a sickness, progressively causing spiritual death, then physical death and finally eternal death (eternal separation from God’s life). God had warned Adam that the result of sin was: “you shall surely die”, which literally is: “dying (spiritually) you shall surely die (physically)” (Genesis 2:17). Without Christ we are all spiritually dead in Adam, and heading for physical death. Physical and spiritual death are closely connected, for they both denote separation from life. The separation of the body from the life of the spirit (physical death) and the separation of the spirit from the life of God (spiritual death) are parallel events. Thus they are often mentioned together in describing the curse of sin. Moreover the salvation of our spirit (our spiritual rebirth when we receive the eternal life of God), and the salvation of our body (in the future resurrection) are also often described together in similar language.
For example, Jesus said: "(1) Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has eternal life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life (our spiritual rebirth into life). Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the (spiritually) dead will hear the voice of the Son of God (through the Gospel); and those who hear (believe) will live. (2) "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming (it is still in the future) in which all who are in the graves (the physically dead) will hear His voice and come forth -those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:24-29).

Again: "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone (1) who (by faith) sees the Son and believes in Him (as the Son of God) may have eternal life (the rebirth of his spirit); and (2) I will raise him up at the last day (the resurrection of his body) ...

Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood (1) has eternal life (in his spirit), and (2) I will raise him up (physically) at the last day” (John 6:40,54). Here, Jesus claims to have the power to overcome and reverse both spiritual and physical death as the Lord of both life and resurrection, so death does not have the last word.

In this story we will see that Lazarus is a picture of all men, under the power of death, both spiritual and physical death. Like Lazarus we were born into the house of Adam, the house of affliction, the house of sin and death. But thank God, death does not have the last word. For ‘Lazarus’ also signifies that ‘God is our Helper’. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to the house of the afflicted ones. Jesus was afflicted with our affliction. He died for our sins and rose again as the victor over all phases of death. Even before that, by raising up Lazarus, Jesus demonstrated through this ‘sign’ (which is a miracle with a message) His total dominion over death and proved His power (ability) to raise us up from death to life. He proved Himself to be both ‘the Resurrection’ (from physical death) and ‘the Life’ (for the spiritually dead). The resurrection of Lazarus is a picture both of our spiritual rebirth and of our physical resurrection. It is a foretaste of these greater miracles, which could only be accomplished after Christ’s resurrection as the first fruits from the dead. Bethany was one of the places where Jesus spent much time, for it was just 2 miles east
of Jerusalem. So when He visited Jerusalem at the Feasts, He would stay there with some of His best friends: Mary and Martha and Lazarus. They had made Him truly welcome in their house. We have seen them before in Luke 10:38-42. Martha’s busyness had meant she did not have time to hear the Word of God, but Mary was commended by Jesus, because she had put first things first and sat at Jesus’ feet, listening to Him.

It was their brother Lazarus who was getting sicker: “it was that Mary, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick” (v2, see John 12:1-9). Mary was clearly well-known to the first Christians, being clearly identified by her act of abandoned sacrificial worship, pouring out thousands of pounds worth of perfume upon Jesus, anointing Him for burial (see Matthew 26:6-13). It seems like the women who really loved Jesus were all called Mary (His mother Mary, Mary Magdalene and this Mary of Bethany).

“Therefore his sisters sent a message to Jesus to Him saying: “Lord, behold, he whom you love (‘phileo’ denoting a brotherly, affectionate love) is sick” (v3). That is a lovely request. Jesus loved everyone with the God type of love, but Jesus was a human being too, and so there were certain people that he really got on well with. He just loved Lazarus and they had a good time together. And so they didn’t even need to ask Jesus to come and heal him, they just knew it was enough to say: “Jesus, the one that you love is sick.” Because Jesus loved Lazarus, they knew He would surely come and help him.

“When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but (is an opportunity) for the glory of God (the manifestation of His power), that the Son of God may be glorified through it (He will be revealed as the Resurrection and the Life of men through the miracle)" (v4). Here we see Jesus as a man of faith. He shows us the spirit of faith. We will see that when the messenger had got to Jesus, He actually knew through the Spirit, that Lazarus had already died, but He wasn’t going to dwell on that or be defeated by that. Faith does not deny the problem, but it denies its right to have the last word. Faith acknowledges God in and over the situation, believing that He is greater and that He will have the final word. Therefore, faith does not dwell on the problem, but starts declaring the word of God. It sees and speaks the solution, the end-result, the will of God. By faith, Jesus said: “this sickness will not end in death, but
God’s glory will be revealed, resulting in the Son of God being glorified”

Sickness and death is not the last word, for God has the last word. Sickness is not something that glorifies God - but it is an occasion for the glory of God. This sickness, Jesus declares, will not have the end-result of death, but it will result in the glory of God (the manifestation of His power). He declares that God is going to turn this crisis around for good. When there is a crisis in your life, God will turn it around for your good and His glory. The great thing about believing God, is that every problem and crisis is a chance for God’s glory to show up, for His power to be manifested. Every difficulty calls us to believe God, that His power and glory will be manifested. Every emergency is an opportunity to trust God, to prove that His power is greater. Faith praises under pressure.

Notice that Jesus equates Himself with God:
“(1) It is an opportunity for the glory of God, that (2) the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

Faith (1) sees any problem as an opportunity to trust God to work and show His glory, and (2) faith is motivated by a desire to see the Lord glorified as a result. Faith works by love. The purpose of miracles is to glorify God, so that men will believe and put their trust in Jesus Christ.

But now an interesting thing happens: “Now Jesus loved (‘agape’) Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was” (v5,6).

This does not seem to make sense. When Jesus heard Lazarus was sick, He waited two more days - because He loved them! The word for love here is ‘agape’ - the God kind of love. Mere human love (‘phileo’) would have caused Him to rush to them, but He was constrained by a higher love, the God-kind of love. He was not controlled by need. He felt and sympathised with needs, but wasn’t controlled by them. He was led by the will of God. Why did He wait? He was following God’s will and timing. He prayed and waited on His Father, who didn’t tell Him to go yet. He wanted to meet needs, but He had to do it in God’s time. He knew God’s way was the best. God said to Him: ‘I want you to wait here’. Human pressure was: ‘get to Lazarus, I’ve got to help him’, but God’s love constrained Him, rather than human expectations. Jesus moved to the beat of a different drum. He wanted the best end-result for them rather than a quick-fix, which human love usually wants. Submit
first to God’s will, then His love will show you the best way to meet needs

**Timing.** Jesus was two days journey away from Bethany. Jesus waited 2 days and then went on the journey which would have taken Him two more days. So $2 + 2 = 4$ days. How long had Lazarus been dead when He got to Bethany? **4 days** (v17). So just about the time the messenger arrived and told Jesus that Lazarus was sick, Lazarus died. So Jesus wasn’t being callous in not immediately rushing off to Lazarus, for he was already dead. But Jesus wanted to perform a greater miracle, by raising him from death not after one, two or three, but **after four days** (something unheard of), so that great glory would go to God. One interesting connection is with Luke 13:31-35, when He receives a warning to leave Perea because Herod Antipas, who governed Perea was out to kill Him. Jesus sent an answer that He would continue to travel and minister and on the third day reach Jerusalem. He spoke this on the very day He set off to raise Lazarus (see also page 84). The Jews had a tradition (myth), that the spirit of a man might hang around for three days after death, hoping to get back into the body. But when the body was too corrupted, it was pointless and so the spirit then left. So, by waiting 4 days, Jesus proved categorically He had Divine power to raise the dead. He could do the impossible. He could not just raise someone who was just dead, but someone who was dead, dead! When you feel like your ‘dead, dead’, when everything is wrong, and nothing is going right, then Jesus can also raise you up out of that.

**Reasons for the delay:**

1. **The end-result was a greater display of God’s glory.**
   Jesus would do a miracle that would establish their faith in Him, preparing them for the greatest sign - His resurrection.

2. **Jesus gave Israel certain miracles that only Messiah could do, which proved He was the Christ.** His final Messianic miracle was to be: ‘the Sign of Jonah’ (Matthew 12:38-40) - a resurrection after 3 days.

Firstly, He did this by raising Lazarus. This required Him to wait at least 3 days. The significance of this sign was seen in its effects, for many more believed in Him (v45), but the Jewish leaders now decided to kill Him, because after this sign, the proof was so strong, that they believed all Israel would turn to Him as the Messiah, and would rise against Rome resulting in the Romans destroying them and their loss their position,
power and privilege (v47-53). (The reason John gave for the large crowds greeting Jesus as the Messiah at His triumphant entry soon after, was the resurrection of Lazarus - John 12:18).

Then He gave them the ultimate Sign of Jonah, by His own resurrection after 3 days. This was only a few weeks after the raising of Lazarus.

3. Another reason why God told Him not to go immediately, was that **He would have walked into a trap.** Going to Bethany at that time was very dangerous, because all the religious leaders were out to kill Jesus. Lazarus and his family were well-known (v19), and it was known that they were close to Jesus. The leaders were looking out for Jesus to come to Bethany, and were waiting to catch Him in their trap. After four days they assumed He was not coming, and so left, although they had their spies looking out for Him (v46). When Jesus arrived the immediate danger had passed, but He still had to leave quickly because of their plots (v54).

Sometimes the Holy-Spirit might tell you - ‘don’t go there yet, wait’, and you might think it doesn’t make sense, but you might be walking into a trap. You need to wait for God, at such times, to give the green light. If He holds you back, He has a reason. By listening and following the Spirit, you’ll stay clear of satan’s traps. That’s what Jesus says in (v9,10).

“Then after that, He said to His disciples: “Let us go into Judea again” (v7). He was following God’s direction, and moving in God’s timing but His disciples got worried saying: “**Master, the Jews recently sought to stone you and are you going there again?”** (v8). “**Jesus - don’t do it! You are going back into the lion’s den. They are out to kill you!”**

“Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him"(v9,10). Jesus is comparing the spiritual to the natural. He is talking about walking in the light of God’s guidance. The ‘light of this world’ (sunlight) is a picture of the illumination of God’s Spirit shining through Christ, the Light (the Sun). Jesus had said: "**I am the Light of the world. He who follows (sees) Me shall not walk in darkness, but (will) have (possess) the light of life (within)"** (John 8:12). We walk in the light by ‘seeing’ Jesus (the Light) by faith, for then the light of Christ is birthed ‘in us’ (we have the light of life, the life and illumination of  p142
the Holy-Spirit, within us). If we walk in the light of day (being led by
the Spirit), we can see any stones, obstacles or traps that might trip us up,
and avoid them, but if we walk in the darkness of night, we will stumble
over these things and fall to our hurt. Jesus is saying: “I am walking in
God’s will, I am walking in the light, for the Holy Spirit is showing me
what to do. He is now leading me to go to Lazarus, and He will protect
me from the enemy’s traps.” God may lead you to a dangerous place,
perhaps involving sacrifice, but the safest place you can be is in God’s
will. If you walk in darkness (out of God’s will), trying to live in safety
and comfort and avoiding all dangers, you will fall and your life go wrong.

“There are 12 hours in the day.” God had given Jesus ‘a day’, a definite
period of time to fulfil His mission. While it was ‘day’ and He walked
with His eyes open to the light of the Spirit, following God step by step,
His enemies could not touch Him or trip Him up. God shows Him where
to walk to avoid every trap. There was going to come a time of course
when the 12 hours of day would come to an end, and Jesus would then
enter into the darkness on the Cross, when He took our sins upon Himself,
before rising again. Likewise for us, God has given us things to do in life
and if we walk in the light we will not stumble, we will avoid the traps of
the enemy and accomplish our mission. Sometimes it might get
dangerous, but the enemy can’t touch us as we walk in the light.

“Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil for God is with me.” But if we if we walk in the
darkness (out of fellowship with God) we walk in danger.

“These things He said, and after that He said to them: "Our friend
Lazarus sleeps, BUT I go that I may wake him up" (v11).
Jesus does not force them into danger. He announces He will go, but
invites them to join Him, by pointing out Lazarus was also their friend.

Here again we see the spirit of faith exemplified in Jesus. Faith does
not deny the problem, but neither does it magnify it. Jesus acknowledged
the natural facts, but in words that indicated this condition was temporary
not permanent (‘Lazarus sleeps’). Faith does not deny the problem,
but denies it the right to have the last word, for God has the last word.
He said: “Lazarus sleeps, BUT I go to awake Him out of sleep”,
“Lazarus is dead, BUT I’m going to do something about it - I go to
raise Him up.” This is one of the wonderful BUTs in the Bible!
(like Eph 2:4). We can say: “Yes, there is a problem, BUT GOD is greater and His power will turn it around!” When Jesus talked about Lazarus sleeping, it meant that he had actually died. But Jesus wasn’t a negative talker. He wanted to keep His talk positive, so He used the word ‘sleep’. This was a better word to use, for death means finality to us (‘it is all over’). But if we sleep, it may look like we are dead, but in fact our spirit is awake, just our body sleeps to arise again in the morning. That is really what death is like for the Christian. It is like a sleep. Our spirit-soul does not go to sleep (for we go straight into the presence of God), but our body goes to sleep until the resurrection morning, when we will hear the voice of the Son of God and arise. Death is temporary for believers, for Jesus has taken the sting out of death. God’s perspective on death is that it is just a sleep. It is not the last word. From this point ‘sleep’ became the standard Christian language for the death of believers.

Now there is a bit of comedy, because the disciples don’t understand Him: “Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get well. However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep" (v12,13). They think He is not thinking straight. They honestly thought Jesus meant he had gone to bed. So, why can’t Mary and Martha wake him up, or even better just let him sleep, for they sleep was good medicine, for then your body can recuperate. They thought: ‘if Lazarus is just sleeping why should we risk our lives just to wake him up!’

“Then Jesus said to them plainly (because they could not understand His meaning, He was forced to say): "Lazarus is dead" (v14). He didn’t want to say ‘dead’, for it could create fear and unbelief in their hearts. He wanted to call it ‘sleep’ (a temporary condition, subject to change). He dwelt on the solution, rather than the problem. What good is staying on the problem, you’ve got to move onto the solution.

To every negative word Jesus gives the positive answer. He looked beyond the problem to see the end-result, God’s greater glory, and the strengthening of their faith in Him:

“And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him" (v15).

He was glad, because if He (Life) was there, Lazarus could not have died. He would have healed Lazarus, but now He will raise him from the dead,
which is far greater, resulting in their faith being all the more established. So, He is declaring in advance that He will raise Lazarus from the dead. He says: "**Lazarus is dead, but I am rejoicing, because I’m going to raise him up. I’m glad it’s not just a healing. I’m glad for your sake, I have a opportunity to raise Lazarus from the dead after 4 days**" That is why this miracle is in the Bible, so that we might not just believe in God as our Healer, but that He is a God who raises the dead. He can turn your impossible situation around. I don’t care how bad your job, family, or health situation is, if He can raise Lazarus from the dead after four days, He can meet you in your need. He is greater than that problem you face. Jesus was glad that He could show that He is the God of the impossible, the God who is greater than anything that comes against us (1John 4:4).

**“Then Jesus said to them plainly: "Lazarus is dead.”** When you are believing God, you don’t want to keep speaking the problem, because you want to express your faith in God, but notice that when there are people who needed to understand the situation, Jesus did tell them the facts. Faith in God does not deny the facts, but it denies their right to keep dominating you. If you are sick, you don't have to deny it, but you deny the sickness the right to stay in your body. You focus on declaring the greater fact of the power of God which is overcoming that sickness - that’s the spirit of faith. However, it’s no good going to the doctor and when he asks: "what’s wrong with you?", you say: "nothing, I’m healed by the stripes of Jesus!" He will just think: ‘*what are you doing in my surgery if you are healed?’* You’ve just got to tell him the facts. Jesus said: ‘**Lazarus is dead**’. That is the present fact, but faith goes beyond that, and says, "**BUT God is going to do something greater, God’s power is greater than the sickness.**" So it is not wrong to state the problem, but, like Jesus, don’t stop there.

**“Then Thomas, who is called the Twin (twin brother), said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (v16).** He is known as doubting Thomas (‘twin’ could refer to him being double-minded), and here again we see his pessimism. But we also see His loving-loyalty and commitment to Jesus. The disciples knew how much the religious leaders hated Jesus, and Thomas was ready to die for Him. Later on, he became single-minded in his faith and love, and he laid down his life in taking the gospel to India.
“So when Jesus came, He found that he (Lazarus) had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother” (v17-19). Many mourners and comforters were there. Clearly this family was well-known. In those days, there were 30 days of official grieving (the burial was on the first day). For a week family and friends would visit and mourn together with the first 3 days being the most intense, often with wild crying.

“Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house” (v20). True to character, Martha is the action-girl and Mary the contemplative one. “Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” (v21). These are words of disappointment. If only Jesus had been there! She knew Jesus would have healed him, but would He raise him from the dead? She was unsure about that. But her faith was strong. She had some hope. Notice what she says next: “But even now (after four days) I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You (even Lazarus’ resurrection!)” (v22)

“Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise (again)" (v23). Again Jesus confirms her faith, declaring in advance that He will raise Lazarus. Now Martha wants more clarification:
“"I know that he will rise again, in the resurrection of the last day” (v24). “Will You raise him now, Lord, or will you do it on the last day?"

This draws some of the greatest words from the lips of Jesus:
“Jesus said to her: “I am the resurrection and the life” (v25).
These are the triumphant words of Deity, of the One Who alone has final authority over life and death. He is saying:
“No, I am not just talking of something in the distant future. I AM, the God of the eternal now! I AM here. The Resurrection and Life is here now! Lazarus won’t have to wait till the last day. Believe in Me.”

“I am the Resurrection and the Life.” This is the essential verse, the key statement, the central claim of Jesus that He will prove by doing this miracle. This is what Jesus wants us to believe through this sign. This is what He is declaring down through the centuries to all men, for
Lazarus represents all of us under the power of death. Jesus says to each of us: “I am your Resurrection and your Life.” Jesus did this miracle for our benefit, so that we would believe in Him as our Resurrection and Life (v15). When we die we shall rise again! When we are down, He will raise us up again. When we are in a trial, trap or temptation, He will give us life and show us the way out. He says: “Believe that I am the God of the Now.” He is your resurrection and the life right now.

People can believe in a God of the past, who used to do great miracles. They can believe in a God of the future will do wonderful miracles one day. He will indeed raise the dead. But we find it harder to believe that He’s the God of the Now - that He wants to heal us, help us, intervene in our lives today. Do you believe in the God of the Now? He is the God: ‘Who is, was and is to come.’ Jesus Christ is: 'the same yesterday, today and forever.” He says to you: “I am your life and salvation, right now.”

(1) “I am the Resurrection” refers to our future physical resurrection from physical death. Jesus claims: “I am the One who will raise you out of physical death into life.”

(2) “I am the Life” refers to our spiritual resurrection from spiritual death (the spiritual is parallel to the physical, and so both resurrections are illustrated by the miracle Lazarus). This speaks of the New Birth when we receive His Eternal Life into our spirits, and we come alive with His life, so that He becomes our Life. He does not just raise us up spiritually from death into life, but continues to sustain us and impart blessing to us by His life within us.

Lazarus is a picture of all men, hopeless and helpless, under the power of spiritual and physical death. Jesus declares Himself to be our Saviour from death on both levels. The resurrection of Lazarus is a picture and a proof of Jesus raising us up from both SPIRITUAL and PHYSICAL death, for He claims to be both the LIFE and the RESURRECTION.

Jesus now explains His claim to be the Resurrection and Life:

(1) ‘I am the Resurrection’: “He who believes in Me, though he may die (physically), he shall live (physically)” (v25).

(2) ‘I am the Life’. “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (v26).

Both benefits are for those who ‘believe in Jesus’. 
(1) This is the resurrection of believers from physical death, so that we will have a glorified body forever (this is called ‘the Resurrection of Life’). Although Lazarus was only ‘resuscitated’, rather than resurrected (he came back to life, but died again) his ‘resurrection’ by Jesus is a picture and example of v25. He was a believer in Christ, and though he died (physically), yet he lived again physically. By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus proves to us that He can and will raise every believer from death into life. Jesus says: “Though a believer dies, yet he shall live, because I will raise him from the dead.” One day, if the Rapture does not happen first, you may die, but that is not the end, because He will raise you up into a glorious body for all eternity. He left Lazarus in death for four days, to show that even if someone is fully in the hands of death, He can and will raise them up on the last day. He is saying: “I am the Resurrection. I have power over physical death. I will raise every believer up from the dead. I’ll prove it by raising Lazarus!”

(2) “And whosoever lives (physically) and believes in Me shall never die (spiritually)” (v26). He continues to talk about those who are physically alive, for it is only while we are alive that we have the choice and opportunity to put our faith in Jesus Christ. Speaking of those who believe in Him while alive on earth, He says: “they will never die.” Clearly this is not referring to physical death, so it must mean that we receive eternal life in our spirits, so that we are saved from spiritual and eternal death, and that if we die physically, we will continue to live on in God’s Presence. “You will never die - you will be born-again, your spirit will be changed from death to life. You were dead in your sins, but now you’ve been made alive to God and you will never die. Your spirit will live forever, for you have eternal, everlasting life, the life of God that will not grow dim or grow old. It is a life that renews itself constantly in the power of God. You will never die, but you will go from glory to glory.”

In summary Jesus is saying: “Whoever believes in Me will experience Me as the Resurrection and the life. Though he is spiritually dead, I will give him My eternal, spiritual life and he will never die. If he dies physically, I will raise him up again physically.” Jesus declares Himself to be the Lord over physical and spiritual death. He declares: “I don’t just have the power over physical death, but also the (greater) power over spiritual death.”
“Then He said: “Do you believe this?” Notice her faith was important to Jesus. He wants us to believe that He is the Lord of life and Conqueror of death and that in Him we have the victory over death. He has defeated death, and wants to share His victory with us. When we believed in Him, He overcame our spiritual death, by giving our spirit a rebirth (2Cor 5:17, Eph 2:5). He will also overcome our physical death on the Last Day. He proved His power and loving intentions as our Life and Resurrection, by raising Lazarus. Thus we can know that Jesus is the Victor over death, our Deliverer from the power and authority (the jaws) of death.

So: “She (Martha) said to Him: “Yes Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who should come into the world” (v27). Now that Jesus has got Martha into faith, which was evidenced by her great confession, He sends her to go and get Mary. “And when she had said this, she went away and called Mary, her sister, secretly (the sisters knew the danger Jesus was in from some of the Jews who wanted to capture Him) saying: “The Master has come and calls for you”, and as soon as she heard that she arose quickly and came to Him. Now Jesus was not yet come to the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him” (v28-30). Jesus had remained on the outskirts of Bethany, in order to have private meetings with Martha and Mary, away from spying eyes.

“The Jews then which were with her in the house and comforting her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her saying “She goes to the grave to weep there.” Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died" (v31,32). When Mary came to Jesus, she fell down at His feet. Every time we see Mary she is at Jesus’ feet - I think that’s a good place to be! This happened three times: once in worship (Matthew 26:6-13), once in hearing the Word (Luke 10:38-42), but this time in sorrow and grief. When we are in despair and grief, and we don’t understand ‘why’ something happened, we should follow Mary’s example and fall at Jesus’ feet. Lay it all at Jesus’ feet! Mary uses exactly the same words as Martha: “Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.”

In their grief together, they must have said this to one another, over and over, so that's the first thing that came out of her mouth! How common is that?
They must have gone round and round in futile circles of ‘if only, if only, if only.’ I don’t think she was angry with Jesus, she was just disappointed.

The emotion of Jesus going into war against death and satan: “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping and the Jews (who came with her) also weeping He groaned (with indignation) in the spirit and troubled (stirred) Himself” (v33). The word for ‘groan’ is also used for the snorting of a horse. It is indignation against the enemy of death. He is getting ready for battle, stirring Himself for action. Romans 8:26 talks of the Holy Spirit helping (literally: taking hold, joining together) with us in our prayers, against the problems, obstacles and opposing forces with groanings Jesus here facing the death of Lazarus sees the horror of death and destruction upon all men. We were designed to live forever. We weren’t made to die. Jesus was moved by His love for us, to go to war for us against this enemy, so that we might be delivered from him “who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). Physical death is just the outward sign that reveals the horror of sin. Sin’s full effects (the curse) go far deeper, namely spiritual death and eternal death. Jesus was coming against sin, satan and death. He was energised in His spirit, groaning in the face of the curse as He prepared to conquer the spirit of death over Lazarus. It was a sign and picture of what He would do for all mankind through His death and resurrection!

“And He said “Where have you laid him?” (He’s getting ready to take action) and they said to Him “Lord, come and see” (v34). They just think He is going to look at the tomb. They are not expecting a resurrection after 4 days! Then it says: ‘Jesus wept’ (v35). This is the shortest verse in the Bible. He feels our pains, griefs and sorrows. He is angry at satan, sin and death, but has compassion upon all men.

“Then said the Jews: “Behold how He loved him” and some of them said: “could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind have caused that even this man should not have died” (v36). Now Jesus had come in for a lot of criticism: “He can’t have loved Lazarus very much, for He waited two days before coming.” Jesus walked to the beat of God’s drum, rather than other people’s expectations, so He was criticised for not caring. But seeing Him weep softened them. At funerals their funerals
they judged how much you loved the deceased by how much you cried! So they thought: ‘at least He did care for Lazarus a bit.’ But their faith in Him was shallow. For they quickly doubted the sincerity of His love by asking: ‘If He really cared for Lazarus, why did He let him die.’ People often ask: ‘Why did God let my friend die, if He is love?’ You have got to have a deeper faith in God when you trust Him even when it looks like He is doing nothing. But as we see in this situation, the love of God (Jesus) was true, and He was doing His best for them. He has no lack of love, and no lack of power. He was going to do an outstanding miracle for them.

“Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself comes to the grave, it was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance (signifying a rich man’s grave, just like the grave where Jesus was buried)” (v38). Jesus again groans in Himself because He is going to war against an enemy, the spirit of death. “Jesus said: “Take away the stone” (v39a). Notice how God works together with man. Even though God was about to do a great miracle, He expected them to co-operate and do what they could do, trusting God to do what they could not do. Only God can raise the dead, but they could take away the stone, so He asked them to do that. Jesus needed the permission of Martha and Mary (the family) to open the tomb. He needs our co-operation of faith and obedience to work in our lives. Jesus was going to do this great miracle, but needed the faith of Martha and Mary to bring it to completion. Even if Jesus had raised Lazarus, if the stone had not been removed, the answer would not have been seen! Lazarus would have died again soon after. So, without our obedience of faith (corresponding actions), God’s (invisible) work in the Spirit cannot come into full manifestation.

“Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days" (v39b). After her earlier good confession of faith, Martha was now wavering: “O Lord do you have to go in and see him, he stinks.” In the presence of Jesus, it is easy to believe, but away from Jesus it is easy to let natural things dominate and unbelief to slip back in (especially as she was surrounded by a worldly atmosphere of grief and unbelief). So, we must guard our heart by keeping His words with all diligence. We must put God’s Word first (Proverbs 4:22,23).
“Jesus said to her: “Martha, didn’t I say to you, that if you would believe you would see the glory of God” (v40). He is encouraging her back into faith by reminding her of His words. The first principle of faith is that faith comes and grows by hearing the Word of God (Rom 10:17).

These words of Jesus were not previously recorded, but He must have told her: “If you believe, you will see the glory of God, you will see the manifestation of God’s power” or in other words: “I’m going to raise Lazarus from the dead.” Notice her faith was important: “if you would believe.” You believe first and then you will see (a lot of people want to see first, and only then they will believe). And so Jesus said: “Come on Martha, stop wavering.” He says to you: “Trust Me.” Martha and Mary trusted and obeyed Him: “Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was lying, and Jesus lifted up His eyes and said “Father, I thank You, that You have heard Me” (v41).

He looks up to heaven. He’s looking above the problems, above the natural, above the crowd and the unbelief. He was making it clear that He was looking to God as the Source. In fact, He had already prayed and settled the outcome with God. He knew that God had heard Him and that He had received the answer that Lazarus would arise. This is the pattern for us. The victory is won in our prayer closet. That is where we receive the answers for our life. Then we walk out whatever we receive from God in prayer. Before Jesus did anything, He first prayed it. He received in prayer and acted out what He saw (received) from God.

Our true life proceeds from God (Eph 2:10). Those who ignore prayer and Church (being too busy!) hurt themselves, because everything that does not proceed from God is wasted, for all such works will ultimately be burnt up. Look at the confidence of Jesus before God. Can you say: “Father, I thank You, that You have heard Me”, even before you have seen the answer? That’s faith!

Jesus said that when we pray, we are to ‘believe that we receive it’ (in the spirit), and we would have it (visibly manifested) in due course: "Whatsoever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them” (Mark11:24). We can only have the confidence to believe we receive when we pray, if we know (1) we are
asking according to God’s will (this assurance comes through His Word and His Spirit), (2) He hears us when we pray and (3) He sends the answer immediately in the Spirit upon hearing our prayer. Then we can know that we have the answer when we pray (1John 5:14,15), that we have believed we have received what we desire (Mark11:24), that we have obtained the help, mercy and blessing we need from the throne of grace (Hebr 4:16)

When we have believed we have received, then petition turns to praise, our requests turn into thanksgiving, as Jesus said: “Father, I thank You.” Now you possess the answer in your spirit, so you don’t have to ask God for it any more.

Once we have received the answer in prayer, it remains for us to use our authority in the earth and speak (command) the answer into manifestation. This is what Jesus does next, but He does it in a way that gives God the glory: “And I know that You hear Me always (confidence because he always prayed according to God’s will), but because of the people that stand by, I said it that they (and us too) may believe that You have sent Me” (v42). He could have just spoken the command, but first He makes it clear that the miracle comes from God in answer to His prayer, so that God gets the glory. He does not want to get the glory for Himself as some kind of human magician or wonder-worker, but rather He wants them to see His unique oneness with His Father, as the Son of God, the Sent-One. Jesus did not glory in His own power, but He gloried in knowing God. He prayed out loud, saying: “God I am trusting in You.” He glorified God. If you want miracles to happen through your life, you must let God get the glory. We must be careful to avoid giving the impression that we are doing something by our own power, when we are really just channels of God’s power. Like Jesus, we must make it clear that it is God doing it, so they will believe in God. So, when Jesus commanded Lazarus to ‘come forth’, He had already lifted the lid on His prayer-life (from 4 days earlier), when He had received the answer from God, so that we could see the Source of His power was God, and not His humanity.

When we speak the word of faith, we must be speaking out something that God has already given us in the Spirit, for otherwise we are in independence, presumption or witchcraft. We must be conscious of trusting in God to bring it to pass.
“And when He had thus spoken He cried with a loud voice: “Lazarus, come forth” (v43).

He had received the answer in His spirit, but how do you bring forth what is in the Spirit into the natural? It is done by speaking WORDS OF FAITH, as well as by other corresponding actions (speaking and acting as if the prayer was answered, as if it was coming to pass). After believing, we are to align our life (our planning, talking and walking) accordingly. As we patiently hold fast our faith-confession (of life and lips) in line with what we have received from God, His power is able to bring it forth into manifestation through us (Hebrews 6:12; 10:23,35,36).

So Jesus spoke the answer forth. He commanded it to COME FORTH. He called life to come back into Lazarus’ body and called him to come out of the tomb (darkness) into the light. He spoke out by faith, what He had already received from God through faith. He spoke the desired end-result. It is by our words that we call and bring forth what we already have (received) in our spirit (Matthew 12:34-37).

When we do this, we are operating in the God-kind of faith. This is how God Himself works. For we are made in His image and are designed to operate in His kind of faith (Mark11:22). God brought the universe to birth this way. He had the universe conceived within in His Spirit (Being), and then it came forth when He said (commanded): “Light be!” Only then did it come into manifestation. He brought forth what was inside Him to the outside by His words. He called it forth into manifestation by speaking it forth by words of faith. So, we give thanks to God for giving it to us, and then we bring it to birth (visible manifestation), by calling it forth.

Jesus described this process of faith in Mark 11:22-24. He said: “Have the God-kind of faith”(v22). This is the faith that “calls (forth) those things that be not (visible), as if they were” (Rom 4:17). That is, by faith, we call them forth from the spirit into the natural, as God did at creation. Say: “Wisdom, come forth into my mind. Healing, come forth into my body. Finances, come forth. Blessing, flow forth.” By our words, we bring things out of our spirit (heart) into our natural life. We speak out (command) the desired result (both positively and negatively). We say: (1) “Answer BE!”, and (2) “Mountain, be removed!” (Mark 11:23). Jesus said: ‘we would have (manifested) whatever we SAY’,
but only if we believe: ‘that those things we say will be come to pass’.
That is, we can only successfully speak the answer forth, when we have
first of all received it in our spirit. So now Jesus describes how that is done
in v24: "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you
pray, believe that you receive them (in your spirit), and you will have
them (manifested).” Notice that ‘having’ is mentioned both in v23 and v24
To ‘have’ something in manifestation, we must (1) receive it from God
through the prayer of faith (v24) and (2) speak that thing forth by the word
of faith, believing that what we say shall come to pass (v23). Thus we will
HAVE what we SAY, if we BELIEVE it (that is, if we have believed we
have received it). Thus, having received something through prayer, there
must also be corresponding words and actions to help bring it to pass.

Let us see this process in the resurrection of Lazarus.
Jesus had received the answer beforehand, for God had heard Him (v41),
but there was no manifestation until He spoke and acted in faith.
What did He do to bring it to pass?

(1) He spoke WORDS of thanksgiving to God (v41).
(2) He spoke WORDS of command calling forth the manifestation:
‘Lazarus, come forth” (v43).
(3) He spoke WORDS commanding the removal of any obstacles to
answer being manifested (v39,44, cf. Mark 11:23)
(4) CORRESPONDING ACTIONS (v41,44).
There must be human co-operation in actions of obedience, for God’s
power to flow fully into our natural lives. We must put actions to our
faith, we act in line with the faith in our heart, we must act as if God’s
word were true (that He is bringing it to pass). We don’t wait for the
manifestation before taking action. If we make no corresponding actions,
then our faith is unproductive (James 2:17,22,26). If they had refused to
move the stone, God’s resurrection power in Lazarus would have not
been seen. God’s power would have been released (invisibly) through
Jesus’ faith, but it (the resurrected Lazarus) would have been blocked
from coming into physical manifestation. For example, if you receive
God’s blessing of prosperity over your finances, that does not mean you
can just sit back and wait for the money to fall from heaven! You have
to put action to your faith, for that (spirit of) prosperity to manifest
(come through). God will bless the work of your hands.
He will bless whatever you set your hand to. He prospers the diligent.
Thus we are to talk and walk in faith, acting as if God’s word to us is 
true, even before we can see it with our eyes.

The prophetic significance of the Sign of Lazarus. When Jesus said: 
“Lazarus, come forth!” it was in a loud voice and with great authority. 
Literally it means: “Lazarus, come out!” He was commanded to come 
out of Paradise (in Hades) into his body, and then to come out of the 
grave. If Jesus had not specified ‘Lazarus’ by name, all the dead would 
have been called to come out of their graves and one day that’s exactly 
what Jesus will do, for the raising of Lazarus is a prophetic picture of the 
resurrection of all believers (unbelievers will also be raised at a later time).

And at this time the spirit-soul of Lazarus would have been in Paradise 
(which was then under the earth) for four days, together with all the other 
Old- Testament saints, who had been waiting hundreds of years for the 
Messiah to come and take them to heaven. Lazarus, along with others 
who had died during Jesus’ ministry, would have told the saints there: 
“The Messiah has come, He is fulfilling all the prophecies, He has been 
healing the sick and raising the dead. I saw Him, I saw what He did. 
He is Jesus, the Messiah.” There would have been great expectation and 
anticipation. Then came the powerful proof. Suddenly they heard the 
voice of authority booming down, resounding into the spiritual world of 
Paradise: “Lazarus, come forth, come out of Hades into your body and 
then come out of the grave.” Lazarus had been with them four days. 
They had settled him in. No one had come to Paradise for so long, only 
to leave again. He was at home. Lazarus said: “Sorry guys, I’ve got to 
leave you now, I told you the Messiah was here and He is my friend!” 
Who else could raise someone from the dead after 4 days! So, Lazarus 
left Paradise with great excitement in his wake. They knew the time 
was coming soon, when they also would be delivered and be carried 
into heaven, because of the redemption Messiah would make for them.

“And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave- 
clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 
"Loose him, and let him go" (v44). They prepared the dead by wrapping 
him around with clothes, and covering his face with a separate cloth. 
So, he came out from the tomb like a ‘mummy’, with his movement
greatly limited by the wrappings around his arms and legs. As well as the miracle of his resurrection, it seems that God’s power had to propel him out to the entrance of the cave. Such was the power of Christ’s command: “Lazarus, come out!”

The raising of Lazarus is a representation of what will happen to us when Jesus returns, when He will do the same for us:

“Do not marvel at this, for the (future) hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice (speaking their name) and they will come forth: (1) those who have done good to the resurrection of life, (2) and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28). As with Lazarus, your body will be lying in the grave, and you will hear Him say your name, followed by: “Come forth! Come forth out of the grave!” Your spirit will be reunited to your body, which will be transformed into an incorruptible body, and you will rise up out of the grave. This will happen at the Return of Christ when you will be resurrected along with all other believers. The unbelievers will also be raised, but only after the 1,000 year reign of Christ in a separate resurrection (Revelation 20).

The raising of Lazarus is also a picture of the spiritual resurrection of all believers, as they are made alive through the New-Birth. We have seen that spiritual and physical death are connected and parallel events. First came man’s spiritual death then his physical death. Likewise our spiritual and physical resurrections are similar. Believers are first resurrected spiritually, and then later on physically. These two events are mentioned together as parallel events in John 5:24-29. Both miracles are brought about by the word of Jesus. Those who are dead (spiritually or physically) will ‘hear the voice of the Son of God’ and are raised to life.

Then in John 11:25,26, Jesus claims to be both:
(1) the Resurrection and (2) the Life, that is, He is the Author of both our physical and spiritual resurrections:
“(1) He who believes in Me, though he may die (physically), he shall live (physically) and (2) whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die (but have eternal spiritual life in Christ)”

It is this dual claim that He proves by raising up Lazarus.
So, Lazarus in the grave is also a picture of all mankind dead in their sins (Eph 2:1-3). We were helpless and hopeless to raise (save) ourselves (Eph 2:8). Only God can raise us out from this death. In His love for us, He called us by name through the Gospel. We heard (believed) the voice of the Son. He spoke into our spirits saying: “Come forth out of sin, out of death, out of the kingdom of darkness, and come alive in Me.”

And just as Lazarus came forth out of death into life, we came forth out of spiritual death into spiritual life; we were made alive, born-again, our spirit transformed from darkness to light (Eph 2:4-6); and as Lazarus came out of the tomb’s darkness into the light of day, so we came forth out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

All this was accomplished by the power of His word spoken into us: “the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness has shone into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Corinthians 4:6). The same God who, at Creation, spoke into the darkness: “Light be!”, bringing forth light and life where there was only darkness, has done the same miracle in our spirits. He has spoken into our hearts: “Light be!” and ‘there was light.’ We came to life; our spirit was reborn. 2Corinthians 4:6 and John 11:43 both describe the new-birth, and they agree that we were made alive by God’s word of faith, by a Divine Command calling us out of death into life. As He brought forth the original creation (Genesis 1), so He also brings forth the New-Creation by the power of His word.

Because we were brought forth by His word and by His life, our spiritual being consists of His resurrected, victorious life and holy nature, and is sustained by this eternal, everlasting life. Our life is in Christ. He is now our life. We live by His life within (John 4:14, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:27; 3:3, 4). He said: "Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19).

The 4 DAYS of Lazarus are prophetic of 4000 YEARS.

Lazarus represents all mankind who died spiritually in Adam. For 4000 years (4 Days) man lay in spiritual death. But after the 4 Days, Jesus came in God’s perfect timing, and defeated spiritual and physical death. Through His death and resurrection, all who believe in Him are raised to spiritual life (reborn). Thus Lazarus is a picture of man, dead in sins for 4 Days (4,000 years), without hope, raised up to new-life by the personal appearance and life-giving word of Jesus!
“Loose him and let him go!” Lazarus is a picture of someone newly born-again. Like him, we were reborn when Jesus spoke into our spirit saying: “Come forth, out of darkness into the light, out of death into life.” He spoke and our spirit was made alive. Notice what Jesus said next to those who were already alive in the light (who represent other believers): “loose him and let him go” (v44).

You see, the liberation and transformation of Lazarus was not yet complete. Yes, when we are reborn our spirit (the inner-man) is made alive, but our outer life (our thoughts, attitudes, words and deeds) needs changing. Lazarus was “bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth.” We are like Lazarus, with our soul wrapped around with the grave-clothes of stinking ways of thinking and habits, things that belonged to our state of spiritual death, to our old life as an unbeliever in the darkness. Lazarus was alive inwardly, but (1) he could not see properly, because of the facecloth and (2) wasn’t free to move, because of the binding grave-clothes. Likewise believers are alive in the spirit and in the kingdom of light, but (1) they are mentally blind to the truth, through ignorance of the Word (John 8:32-36), and (2) they are not free to walk and move in the Spirit.

Notice that Jesus did what He alone could do (raise Lazarus), but He expected the people to do what they could do (free Lazarus from his wrappings so that he could see and walk). He did not instantly free Lazarus from his bindings, but told his friends to ‘loose him and let him go.’ (He expects us to do what we can do, and to trust Him to do what we can’t do).

This speaks of our vital ministry to others, especially new believers. Does Jesus say: “Go condemn the new Christian, because he is wrapped around with so many problems and faults”? No! He says: “Loose him and let him go.” That is what we should do for a new Christian, who has just been raised up out of the tomb of spiritual death. Inwardly, he is now a new-creation in Christ (2Cor 5:17), but (outwardly) he may still be blinded and bound by things from his past (wrong attitudes and ways of thinking, mental strongholds, emotional hurts, demonic oppressions, and physical addictions). As a new-born babe in Christ, who does not know much, who can’t see where to go and is not able yet
to free himself from the things that bind and entangle him, he needs our help and guidance to start living out the new-life he has been given, so that he can follow Christ and walk in the fruit of the Spirit. A process begins of stripping off the things from the old-life, so that the real reborn ‘Lazarus’ can be seen, so that he can see with his recreated eyes the light (truth) of God and His Kingdom, and so that he can be freed to walk in the ways of God, to worship God and serve God in Spirit and truth.

His mind, attitudes, habits need changing, but we are not to say: “You shouldn't be like that, you are no good.” Jesus tells us to have a ministry of love and grace, to loose people and to let them go. He says to us: “Don’t condemn them, but loose them and let them go. Help take their grave-clothes off, so that they can be free to walk in My ways, in faith, walking in the power of God by My Spirit.”

This ministry to believers (that Jesus Himself calls us to), involves the Word of God and prayer. We teach them God’s ways, renewing their minds by the Word of God to who they are in Christ and what they can do in Him, and how they can walk by faith under (in) the grace, power, love and wisdom of God. We also pray for them and minister God’s love, healing, the Holy-Spirit and perhaps deliverance to them.

As a result of this ministry, the cloth (the blindfold of unbelief) comes off his eyes and he sees the light (the truth of the Word) clearly. As the things from his old-life that bound him and held him back (from walking in the Spirit, moving forward in God and doing His work) are removed, he discovers the new life of freedom (from sin, satan, fear, worry and curse) for which Christ has set him free.

As the wrappings (from the old-life) come off, so the real ‘Lazarus’ is revealed, the new-man who walks in the newness of the resurrection life of (imparted by) Christ. As he is released from the power of what had bound him, he finds he has been set free with the ability to walk with God in newness of life by the power of the Spirit. He is loosed to live in Christ! As with Lazarus, his new life will be an undeniable testimony to the power of Jesus Christ to save a man and raise him from the guttermost to the uttermost!
22. The Plot to Kill Jesus (John 11:45-57).

The after effects of the miracle: “Then (having witnessed the raising of Lazarus) many of the Jews who had come to Mary and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him (because it was such a clear Messianic sign)” (v45). Imagine the drama of Christ coming 4 days after a burial, (with many sceptics and enemies present) declaring He is the Resurrection and the Life and then proving it, saying: ‘Lazarus, come Forth’!

“But some of them (unbelievers, who included spies left at the funeral to look out for Jesus for it was well known the leaders wanted Him dead) went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did” (v46). So, as a result of this miracle many believed, but also many more other turned against Jesus and reported Him to the Pharisees. So, the Jewish leaders had the firsthand testimony of their own people, that Lazarus was dead four days and was raised up by Jesus. Thus they knew of this conclusive Messianic Miracle. Some won’t believe whatever proof they have, because they don’t want to! God gives you the evidence that you need (in the Bible, in history, through people who testify to changed lives), but ultimately whether you believe or not is your decision. Some will not believe against all the evidence and they will have to account to God for that. Any one who truly wants to know God will find Him.

But the unbelieving Jewish leaders could not deny the miracle: Then the Chief Priests and the Pharisees gathered a Council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs (they could not deny the miracles). If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him (as the Messiah) and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation" (v47,48). They saw the many miracles of Jesus, and the many people turning to Jesus in faith through Lazarus. Their authority and position was threatened by the popularity of Jesus. They could see the whole nation believing in Jesus as the Messiah-King of Israel and uniting under Him against the Romans. Notice they believed more in the power of Rome than God’s Messiah, because they expected Him to fail, resulting in the loss of (1) their place of leadership and (2) Israel’s nationhood. Notice they were more worried about their status and position, than the nation, which was added as an afterthought to sound less self-serving.
“And one of them, Caiaphas, being High Priest that year, said to them "You know nothing at all (getting their attention). You do not realise that it is expedient (better) for us that one man (Jesus) should die for (instead of) the people, than that the whole nation should perish" (v49,50). By this he was telling them to murder Jesus, and justifying it, by saying it would save Israel from the judgement of Rome - in fact he was rejecting Israel’s salvation and Rome destroyed Israel in AD 70 anyway).

God overruled the words he spoke, so that they were prophetic (God can even speak through an ass!). There might be a preacher you just don’t like, but listen to God, He can still speak to you through his words):

“Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being High Priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation (Israel), and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together into one, the children of God who were scattered abroad (a prophecy of the Church). (v51,52). He prophesied that Jesus would die for all the people to avert judgement, in other words He would suffer the judgement of death, in the place of (instead of) us, so that we might all live.

“Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death” (v53).

They had made the final decision based on Caiaphas’ ruling. John 12:10 says they planned to killed Lazarus too, because of his powerful testimony!

“Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples” (v54). The last few weeks were spent preparing His disciples and touring through Samaria, Galilee and Perea (with the ultimate aim of reaching Jerusalem before Passover) choosing His route in order to catch the crowds travelling down through Perea (to avoid the hated Samaritans) to Jerusalem for Passover (see page 84). “And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the Temple, "What do you think - that He will not come to the Feast?" They all knew there was a contract out for His life: “Now both the Chief Priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him” (v55-57). The final phase of Jesus’ ministry, the last week leading up to His death at Passover in Jerusalem, starts in John 12:1.
Appendix: John and the Chronology of Jesus’ Life

John is more thoroughly chronological in its structure than the other Gospels, with many time references being given. Matthew and Mark do not always events in their exact order, although Luke, as well as John, is in chronological order (Luke 1:3) and gives us vital chronological information (Luke 1:5; 2:1; 3:1,23; 13:6-9). It is John, however, who gives us the backbone of the chronology (timing) of the life and ministry of Jesus. He does this largely by centering his thought around the Feasts of Israel and relating the ministry of Jesus to them.

Jesus fulfilled the Law and therefore kept the Feasts, for every Jewish male was required to attend the three main Feasts every year (Deut 16:16):
1. Passover and Unleavened Bread was a week starting on 14th day of the first month (April/ May). (2) Pentecost was about 50 days later in June.
2. Tabernacles was a week starting on the 15th of the 7th month (October)

Therefore, these were the main fixed times on the Jewish Calendar, around which religious life revolved. John clearly believed that the utterances of Jesus at these occasions were especially significant. The Feasts were full of prophetic significance, and so Jesus, as the Messiah, must personally fulfil these Feasts, and John’s Gospel shows how He did this. Thus most of the action in John takes place around the Feasts, and what happened between these appointed times is supplied by the other Gospels.

First of we shall reconstruct the overall chronology of Jesus from John.
1. His Birth was on the Feast of Tabernacles (2 BC). “The Word became flesh and dwelt (TABERNACLED) among us and we beheld His glory” (John 1:14). The glory of God (Christ) coming and dwelling in a human Temple or Tabernacle is a clear fulfilment of the Feast. Solomon’s Temple was also dedicated and filled with God’s glory at Tabernacles.
2. His Ministry started when He was close to His 30th Birthday (Luke3:23)

Therefore, this was about Tabernacles AD 29.
3. We also know Jesus died at Passover AD 33, as our Passover Lamb.
   Thus His Ministry was three and a half years, as confirmed by Luke 13:6-9 and by the Feasts in John (as we shall see).
4. Thus His total life on earth was exactly 33.5 years from Tabernacles (15/7/2 BC) to Passover (14/1/33 AD)!

The Feasts in John. There are 3 Passovers in John:
1. John 2:13 is clearly His first Passover in ministry (AD 30), see p26.
2. As we shall see the Passover of AD 31 is not mentioned.
3. John 6:4 mentions the Passover of AD 32 (Feeding the 5,000).
4. John 11:55 mentions the final Passover of AD 33 at which Christ died.
This shows how John spans the three and a half years of ministry.

**There is also an unnamed Feast in John 5:1,** upon which opinion is divided between Passover (1st month) and Tabernacles (7th month). I choose the latter as Passovers are always mentioned by name in John. However, Tabernacles is often just called ‘the Feast’ (John 7:2, 10, 14, 37). Whichever it is, we can fix the year to AD 31, from other clues. We can date John 4:35 in Samaria to January/February AD 31 (see page 45), which means the Feast of 5:1 must be after this, either Passover or Tabernacles AD 31, but no later than this, because the Passover of AD 32 is John 6:4. This is confirmed by the incident of the disciples picking ripe corn in Luke 6:1 (Matt 12:1, Mark 2:23) which must be Springtime, and its position in the accounts make AD 30 too early and 32 too late. Thus we have justified the existence of the unmentioned Passover of AD 31.

**The Feast of Tabernacles AD 32 (October) is mentioned in John 7:2.**

**The Feast of Dedication (December 32 /January 33) is in John 10:22.**

**It remains to demonstrate the chronology of John’s Gospel,** and how it gives the backbone for hanging the added information from the other Gospels.

1. **John 1:1-18:** Jesus, the Word in eternity past, born at Tabernacles (2 BC).

2. **John 1:19-4:42:** First Phase of Ministry (only in John’s Gospel)
   a) 1:19-2:11 gives a two week sequence (see page 8 on), soon after Tabernacles 29
   b) 2:12, “After this” covers the 6 month jump to the next Passover 30 (2:13)
   c) 2:13-3:21 covers events at Passover 30 in Jerusalem.
   d) 3:22 “After these things” is a move to a Judean and Samaritan ministry (3:22-4:42)

   a) 4:43: “After 2 days” (February 31) gives the transition to new ministry in Galilee.
   b) 5:1: “After these things” covers the jump to Tabernacles 31.
   c) 5:1-47: covers events at Tabernacles 31 in Jerusalem.

   a) 6:1: “After these things” covers the 6 month jump to just before Passover 32.
   b) 6:1-71: covers events near Passover 32.

   a) 7:1: “After these things” covers the 6 month jump to Tabernacles 32.
   b) 7:1-10:21: covers events at Tabernacles 32.
   c) 10:22-39: covers events at Dedication 32/33.
   d) 10:40-11:57; covers events leading up to Passover 33.

Derek Walker is married to his lovely wife Hilary.

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